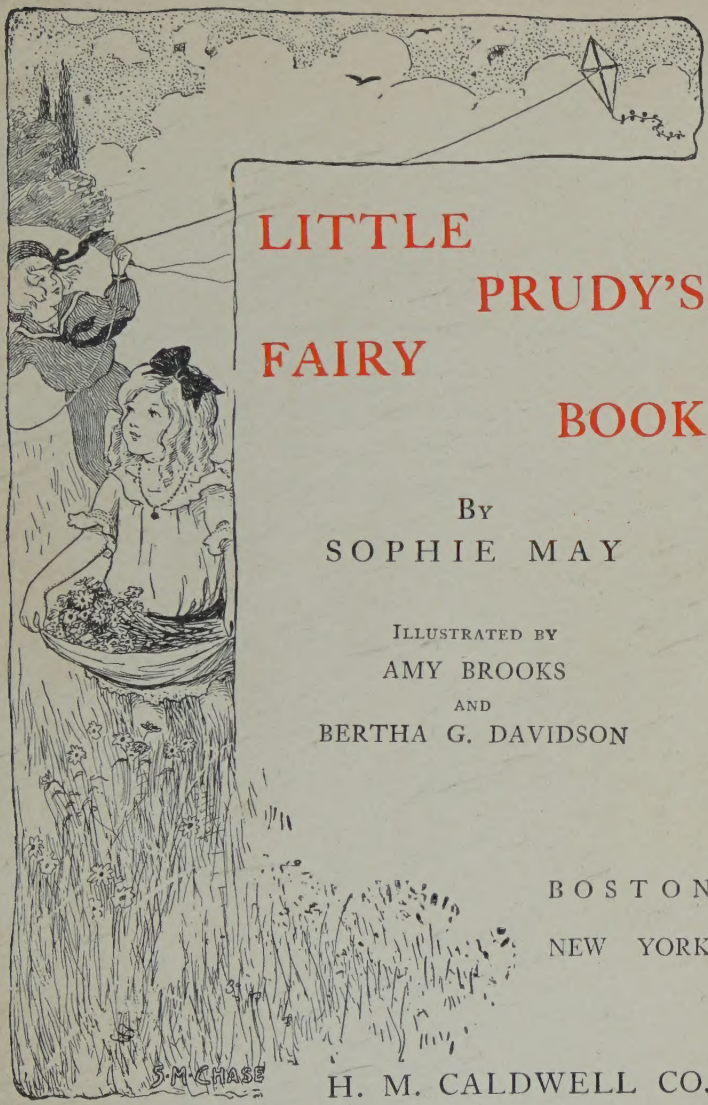
LITTLE PRUDY SERIES

CHRISTOBAL AND THE PAINTING. Page 20.



LITTLE PRUDY'S FAIRY BOOK

By
SOPHIE MAY

Illustrated by
AMY BROOKS
and
BERTHA G. DAVIDSON

BOSTON
NEW YORK
H. M. CALDWELL CO.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1865, by
LEE & SHEPARD
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts

Copyright, 1893, by Rebecca S. Clarke

All Rights Reserved

Little Prudy's Fairy Book

THIS

BOOK OF FAIRY TALES

IS DEDICATED

TO LITTLE BESSIE.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION 9

CRISTOBAL 19

WILD ROBIN 35

THE VESPER STAR 53

THE WATER-KELPIE 59

THE LOST SYLPHID 74

THE CASTLE OF GEMS 100

THE ELF OF LIGHT 117

THE PRINCESS HILDA 137

GOLDILOCKS 160

FAIRY BOOK.

INTRODUCTION.

While Prudy was in Indiana visiting the Cliffords, and in the midst of her trials with mosquitoes, she said one day, —

"I wouldn't cry, Aunt 'Ria, only my heart's breaking. The very next person that ever dies, I wish they'd ask God to please stop sending these awful skeeters. I can't bear 'em any longer, now, certainly."

There was a look of utter despair on Prudy's disfigured face. Bitter tears were trickling from the two white puff-balls which had been her eyes; her forehead and cheeks were of a flaming pink, broken into little

snow-drifts full of stings: she looked as if she had just been rescued from an angry bee-hive. Altogether, her appearance was exceedingly droll; yet Grace would not allow herself to smile at her afflicted little cousin. "Strange," said she, "what makes our mosquitoes so impolite to strangers! It's a downright shame, isn't it, ma, to have little Prudy so imposed upon? If I could only amuse her, and make her forget it!"

"Oh, mamma," Grace broke forth again suddenly, "I have an idea, a very brilliant idea! Please listen, and pay particular attention; for I shall speak *in a figure*, as Robin says. There's a certain small individual who is not to understand."

"I wouldn't risk that style of talking," said Mrs. Clifford, smiling; "or, if you do, your figures of speech must be *very* obscure, remember."

"Well, ma," continued Grace with a significant glance at Prudy, "what I was going to say is this: We wish to treat certain young relatives of ours very kindly; don't we, now? — certain afflicted and abused young relatives, you know.

"Now, I've thought of an entertainment. Ahem! Yesterday I entered a certain Englishman's house," — here Grace pointed through the window towards Mr. Sherwood's cottage, lest her mother should, by chance, lose her meaning, — "I entered a certain Englishman's house just as the family were sitting down to the table, — *festal board.* I mean.

"They were talking about mistle-toe boughs, and all sorts of old-country customs; and then they said what a funny time they had one Christmas, with the youngest, about the *mizzle,* as he called it: do you remember, ma? do you understand?"

"You mean little Harvey? Oh, yes."

"Pray do be careful, ma! Then Mr. Sherwood said to his — I mean, the *hat* said to the *bonnet*, that there were some wonderful — ahem — legends, about genii and sprites and — and so forth; not printed, but *written*, which the boy liked to hear when he was 'overgetting' the measles. A certain lady, not three inches from your chair, ma, was the one who wrote them; and now" —

Prudy had turned about, and the only remnants of her face which looked at all natural — that is, the irises and pupils of her swollen eyes — were shining with curiosity.

"There, now, what is it, Gracie? what is it you don't want me to hear?"

Grace laughed. "Oh, nothing much, dear: never mind."

"You oughtn't to say 'Never mind,'" pursued Prudy: "my mother tells me *always* to mind."

"I only mean it isn't any matter, Prudy."

"Oh! do you? Then don't you care for my skeeter-bites? You always say, 'Never mind!' I didn't know it wasn't *any matter*."

"Now, ma," Grace went on, "I want to ask you where are those I-don't-know-what-to-call-'ems? And may I copy them, Cassy and I, into a book, for a certain afflicted relative?"

"Yes, yes, on gold-edged paper!" cried Prudy, springing up from the sofa; "oh, do, do; I'll love you dearly if you will! Fairy stories are just as nice! What little Harvey Sherwood likes, *I* like, and I've had the measles; *but* I shouldn't think his father and mother'd wear their hat and bonnet to the dinner-table!"

"Deary me!" laughed Grace; "how happened that little thing to mistrust what I meant?"

"It would be strange if a child of her age, of ordinary abilities, should *not* understand," remarked Mrs. Clifford, somewhat amused. "Next time you wish to ask me any thing confidentially, I advise you to choose a better opportunity."

"When may she, Aunt 'Ria?" cried Prudy, entirely forgetting her troubles; "when may she write it, Aunt 'Ria, she and Cassy?"

"A pretty piece of folly it would be, wouldn't it, dear, when you can't read a word of writing?"

"But Susy can a little, auntie; and mother can a great deal: and I'll never tease 'em, only nights when I go to bed, and days when I don't feel well. Please, Aunt 'Ria."

"Yes, ma, I know you can't refuse," said Grace.

Mrs. Clifford hesitated. "The stories are

yellow with age, Grace; they were written in my girlhood: and they are rather torn and disarranged, if I remember. Besides, my child, my flowing hand is difficult to read."

"Oh, mamma, I think you write beautifully! splendidly!"

"Another objection," continued Mrs. Clifford: "they are rather too old for Prudy, I should judge."

"But I keep a-growing, Aunt 'Ria! Don't you s'pose I know what fairy stories mean? They don't mean any thing! You didn't feel afraid I'd believe 'em, did you? I wouldn't believe 'em, I *promise* I wouldn't; just as true's I'm walking on this floor!"

"Indeed, I hope you would not, little Prudy; for I made them up as I went along. There are no fairies but those we have in our hearts. Our best thoughts are good fairies; and our worst thoughts are evil fairies."

"Oh, yes, auntie, I know! When we go bathing in the ocean, Susy says, 'Let's be all clean, so the spirit of the water can enter our hearts.' And it does; but it goes in by our noses."

Mrs. Clifford had tacitly given her consent to Grace's copying the stories. This task was performed accordingly, much to the disgust of Horace, who declared that of the whole number only the tale of "Wild Robin" was worth reading.

"And 'Wild Robin,'" said Grace, instructively, "is the only one that has a moral for you, Horace. When our soldiers are starving so, it is really dreadful to see how you dislike corned eef and despise vegetables! Such a dainty boy as you needs to be stolen a while by the fairies."

"Well, Gracie, I reckon you'd run double-quick to pull me off the milk-white steed,

You couldn't get along without me two days. Look here! what story has a moral for you, miss? It's the 'Water-kelpie.' You are like the man that married Moneta: you're always wanting money."

"But it's for the soldiers, Horace," said Grace, with a smile of forbearance toward her brother. "I'm willing to give all my pocket-money; and I mean the other girls shall. If we're stingy to our country these days, we ought to be shot! 'Princess Hilda's' the best story in the book. I wish Isa Harrington could read it! She wouldn't make any more mischief between Cassy and me!"

"I like 'The Lost Sylphid' the best," said Prudy; "but *was* she a great butterfly, do you s'pose? The stories are all just as nice; just like book stories. I shouldn't think anybody made 'em up. Aunt 'Ria can write as

good as the big girls to the grammar-school. I promised not to believe a single word; and I sha'n't. I'm glad she called it *my* Fairy Book."

CRISTOBAL.

A CHRISTMAS LEGEND.

Long ago, in fair Burgundy, lived a lad named Cristobal. His large dark eyes lay under the fringe of his lids, full of shadows; eyes as lustrous as purple amethysts, and, alas! as sightless.

He had not always been blind, as perhaps a wild and passionate lad, named Jasper, might have told you. On a certain Christmas Eve, a merry boy was little Cristobal, as he pattered along to church, trying with his wooden shoes to keep time to the dancing bells. In his hand he carried a Christmas candle of various colors. Never, he thought,

was a rainbow so exquisitely tinted as that candle. Carefully he watched it when it winked its sleepy eye, eagerly begging his mamma to snuff it awake again. How gayly the streets twinkled with midnight lanterns! And how mortifying to the stars to be outdone by such a grand illumination!

A new painting had just been hung in the church, — the Holy Child, called by the people "Little Jesus," with an aureola about his head. Cristobal looked at this picture with reverent delight; and, to his surprise, the Holy Child returned his gaze: wherever he went, the sweet, sorrowful eyes followed him. There was a wondrous charm in that pleading glance. Why was it so wistful? What had those deep eyes to say?

The air was cloudy with the breath of frankincense and myrrh. Deep voices and the heavy organ sounded chants and an-

*th*ems. There were prayers to the coming Messiah, and the sprinkling of holy water; and, at last, the midnight mass was ended.

Then, in tumult and great haste, the people went home for merry-makings. Cristobal, eager to see what the Yule-log might have in store for him, rushed out of the church with careless speed, stumbling over a boy who stood in his way, — the haughty, insolent Jasper. Jasper's beautiful Christmas-candle was cracked in twenty pieces by his fall.

"I'll teach you better manners, young peasant!" cried he, rushing upon Cristobal in a frenzy, and dealing fierce blows without mercy or reason.

It was then that Cristobal's eyes went out like falling stars. Their lustre and beauty remained; but they were empty caskets, their vision gone.

Then followed terrible anguish; and all Cristobal's mother could do was to hold her boy in her arms, and soothe him by singing. At last the fever was spent; but the pain still throbbed on, and sometimes seemed to burn into Cristobal's brain. He cried out again and again, "What right had that fierce Jasper to spring upon me so? I meant him no harm; and he knew it. Oh, I would like to see him chained in a den! He is like the wicked people who are turned into wolves at Christmas-tide. I would cry for joy if I could hear him groan with such pain as mine!"

Poor Cristobal never hoped to see again. He carried in his mind pictures of cities and hamlets, of trees, flowers, and old familiar faces; but oftenest came Jasper's face, just as it had last glared on him with blood-thirsty eyes. It was a terrible countenance. Only

one charm could dispel the horror, — the remembrance of the beautiful Child in the church. That picture blotted out every thing else. It was like the refrain in the Burgundy carols, "Noel, Noel," which comes again and again, and never tires of coming.

A whole year passed away. Cristobal's mother only prayed now that her boy might suffer less: she had ceased to pray for the healing of his blindness.

Now it was Christmas-tide again. Ever since Advent, people had been clearing their throats, and singing carols. They roasted chestnuts, drank white wine, and chanted praises of the "Little Jesus," who was soon to come, bringing peace on earth, good-will to men.

In the streets, one heard bagpipes and minstrels; and, by the hearthstones, the music of the wandering piper. The children began to

talk again of the Yule-log, and to wonder what gifts Noel would bring to place under each end of it; for these little folks, who have no stocking-saint like our Santa Claus, believe in another quite as good, who rains down sugar-plums in the night.

Everywhere there was a joyful bustle. Housewives were making ready their choicest dishes for the great Christmas-supper; fathers were slyly peeping into shop-windows, and children hoarding their sous and centimes for bonbons and comfits.

Everybody was merry but Cristobal; or so thought the lad. He had no money to spend, and little but pain for his holiday-cheer. A patch here and there in his worn clothes was the best present his thrifty mother was able to make; always excepting the little variegated taper, which few were too poor to buy.

Christmas Eve came. Family friends dropped in. The Yule-log was set on the fire with shouts and singing. "Oh that I could see these kind faces!" moaned Cristobal. "No doubt, Jasper's chestnuts are popping merrily; and his shoes will be full of presents. And here am I! My head aches, and my eye-balls burn."

He stole out of the room, and, throwing himself on a wicker bench, mused over his troubles in solitude. One might have supposed him sleeping; for how should one imagine that his beautiful eyes were of no manner of use, except when they were closed? When Cristobal said, "Let me see," he dropped his eye-lids; and what he saw then, no artist can paint.

On this night, a beautiful child appeared before him, as like the picture of the Little Jesus as if it had stepped out of its frame on

the church-wall. Even the crimson and blue tints of the old painting were faithfully preserved; and every fold of the soft drapery was the very same.

"I saw you, Cristobal, when you came before me with your colored candle, one year ago."

"I knew it, I knew it!" cried Cristobal, clasping his hands in awe. "I saw your eyes follow me; and I never once turned but you were looking. They told me it was only a picture; but I said for that very reason your eyes were sorrowful, — you longed to be alive."

The child replied by a slight motion of the head; and the aureola trembled like sunlight on the water. The longer Cristobal gazed, the more courage he gathered. "Lovely vision," said he, "if vision you may be, — I have said to myself, I would gladly walk to

Rome with peas in my shoes, if I could know what you wished to say to me that Christmas night."

"Only this, little brother: Are you ready for Christmas?"

"Alas! no: I never am. I have only two sous in the world."

"Poor Cristobal! Yet, without a centime, one may be ready for Christmas."

"But I am so very unhappy!"

"You do indeed look sad, little brother: where is your pain?"

"In my eyes," moaned the boy, pouring out the words with a delightful sense of relief; for he was sure they dropped into a pitying heart. "Beloved little Jesus, let me tell you that since I saw you last I have been wickedly injured. Now I have always a pain in my eyes: there are two flames behind them, which burn day and night."

I grieve for you," said the Child with exquisite tenderness; "yet, dear boy, for all that, you might be ready for Christmas: but is there not also a pain throbbing and burning in your *heart?*"

"Oh, if you mean that, I am tossed up and down by vexation: I am full of hatred against that terrible Jasper. It was all about a miserable Christmas-candle he carried. I broke it by pushing him down. Tell me, was he right to fly at me like a wild beast? Ought he not to suffer even as I have suffered? Is it just, is it right, for the great man's son to put out a peasant boy's eyes, and be happy again?"

"Misguided Jasper!" said the Child solemnly; "let him answer for his own sin: judge not, little brother."

Cristobal hid his face in his hands, and wept for shame.

"Shall I give you ten golden words for a Christmas-gift? Will you hide them in your heart, and be happy?"

"I will," answered Cristobal.

"They are these," said the Child with a voice of wondrous sweetness: "Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

Cristobal repeated the words, a soft light stealing over his face. "I will remember," he said, looking up to meet the pleading eyes of the Child: but, lo! the whole face had melted into the aureola; nothing was left but light. Yet Cristobal was filled with a new joy; and, as he opened his eyes, his dream — if dream it were — changed, becoming as sweet and solemn as a prayer. It seemed to him that the roof of the cottage glittered with stars, and was no longer a roof, but the boundless sky; and, afar off, like remem-

bered music, a voice fell on his ear, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you your trespasses."

Cristobal arose, and, although still blind, walked in light. "It is the aureola which has stolen into my heart," thought Cristobal. "The pain and hate are all gone. Now I am ready for Christmas. I wish I could help poor Jasper, who has such a weight of guilt to carry!"

Next day, "golden-sided" Burgundy saw no happier boy than Cristobal. He walked in the procession that night, carrying a candle whose light he could not see; but what did it signify, since there was light in his soul?"

Hark! In the midst of the Christmas-chimes breaks the jangling of fire-bells. The count's house is on fire! The sparks pour

out thicker and faster; tongues of flame leap to the sky; the bells clang hoarsely; the Christmas procession is broken into wild disorder; the wheels of the engine roll through the streets, unheard in the din.

Cristobal rushed eagerly toward the flames, but was pulled away by the people.

"We cannot drown the fire!" they cried: "the building must fall! Are the inmates all safe?"

"All, thank Heaven!" cried the count.

"No: *Jasper!* See, he waves his hand from the third story! Save him! save my boy!"

Jasper had set fire to a curtain with his fatal Christmas-candle. Now he raved and shouted in vain: no one would venture up the ladder.

"O Little Jesus," whispered Cristobal, "give light to my eyes, even as unto my soul! Let me save Jasper!"

At once the iron band fell from Cristobal's vision. He saw, and, at the same moment, felt a supernatural strength. He tore away from the restraining arms of the people; he rushed up the ladder, shouting, "In the name of the Little Jesus!" He reached the window, heedless of his scorched arms. "Jasper!" he cried, seizing the half-conscious boy, "be not afraid: I have the strength to carry you."

And down the ladder he bore him, step by step, through the crackling flames.

Jasper was revived; and the fainting Cristobal was borne through the streets in the arms of the populace.

"Wonder of wonders!" they all shouted.

"It was the Little Jesus," gasped Cristobal: "he opened my eyes; he guided me up the ladder, and down again!"

"Hallelujah!" was now the cry. "On the

birthday of our Lord, the blind receive their sight."

"It is a triumph of faith," said the saints reverently.

"A miracle," murmured the nuns, making the sign of the cross.

"Not a miracle," replied the wise doctors, after they had first consulted their books: "it is only the electrifying of the optic nerve."

But hardly any two could agree; and what was so mysterious at the time is no clearer now.

"Dear little Cristobal," sobbed the broken-hearted Jasper, "how could you forgive such a wicked boy as I?"

"It was very easy," replied Cristobal, "when once the Little Jesus called me 'brother,' and bade me pray for you."

"Oh that I could repay you for your won-

derful deed of love," said Jasper, through his tears.

"Do not thank me," whispered Cristobal, with a look of awe; "thank the Little Jesus. And when he comes again next year, to ask what feelings we hold in our hearts, let us both be ready for Christmas."

WILD ROBIN.

A SCOTTISH FAIRY TALE.

In the green valley of the Yarrow, near the castle-keep of Norham, dwelt an honest, sonsy little family, whose only grief was an unhappy son, named Robin.

Janet, with jimp form, bonnie eyes, and cherry cheeks, was the best of daughters: the boys, Sandie and Davie, were swift-footed, brave, kind, and obedient; but Robin, the youngest, had a stormy temper, and, when his will was crossed, he became as reckless as a reeling hurricane. Once, in a passion, he drove two of his father's "kye," or cattle, down a steep hill to their death. He seemed not to care for home or kindred, and often pierced the tender heart of his mother with

sharp words. When she came at night, and "happed" the bed-clothes carefully about his form, and then stooped to kiss his nut-brown cheeks, he turned away with a frown, muttering, "Mither, let me be."

It was a sad case with Wild Robin, who seemed to have neither love nor conscience.

"My heart is sair," sighed his mother, "wi' greeting over sich a son."

"He hates our auld cottage and our muckle wark," said the poor father. "Ah, weel! I could a'maist wish the fairies had him for a season, to teach him better manners."

This the gudeman said heedlessly, little knowing there was any danger of Robin's being carried away to Elf-land. Whether the fairies were at that instant listening under the eaves, will never be known; but it chanced, one day, that Wild Robin was sent across the moors to fetch the kye.

"I'll rin away," thought the boy: "'tis hard indeed if ilka day a great lad like me must mind the kye. I'll gae aff; and they'll think me dead."

So he gaed, and he gaed, over round swelling hills, over old battle-fields, past the roofless ruins of houses whose walls were crowned with tall climbing grasses, till he came to a crystal sheet of water, called St. Mary's Loch. Here he paused to take breath. The sky was dull and lowering; but at his feet were yellow flowers, which shone, on that gray day, like freaks of sunshine.

He threw himself wearily upon the grass, not heeding that he had chosen his couch within a little mossy circle known as a "fairy's ring." Wild Robin knew that the country people would say the fays had pressed that green circle with their light feet. He had heard all the Scottish lore of brownies, elves,

will-o'-the-wisps, and the strange water-kelpies, who shriek with eldritch laughter. He had been told that the queen of the fairies had coveted him from his birth, and would have stolen him away, only that, just as she was about to seize him from the cradle, he had *sneezed;* and from that instant the fairy-spell was over, and she had no more control of him.

Yet, in spite of all these stories, the boy was not afraid; and if he had been informed that any of the uncanny people were, even now, haunting his footsteps, he would not have believed it.

"I see," said Wild Robin, "the sun is drawing his night-cap over his eyes, and dropping asleep. I believe I'll e'en take a nap mysel', and see what comes o' it."

In two minutes he had forgotten St. Mary's Loch, the hills, the moors, the yellow flowers.

He heard, or fancied he heard, his sister Janet calling him home.

"And what have ye for supper?" he muttered between his teeth.

"Parritch and milk," answered the lassie gently.

"Parritch and milk! Whist! say nae mair! Lang, lang may ye wait for Wild Robin: he'll not gae back for oatmeal parritch!"

Next a sad voice fell on his ear.

"Mither's; and she mourns me dead!" thought he; but it was only the far-off village-bell, which sounded like the echo of music he had heard lang syne, but might never hear again.

"D'ye think I'm not alive?" tolled the bell. "I sit all day in my little wooden temple, brooding over the sins of the parish."

"A brazen lie!" cried Robin.

"Nay, the truth, as I'm a living soul!

Wae worth ye, Robin Telfer: ye think yer sel' hardly used. Say, have your brithers softer beds than yours? Is your ain father served with larger potatoes or creamier buttermilk? Whose mither sae kind as yours, ungrateful chiel? Gae to Elf-land, Wild Robin; and dool and wae follow ye! dool and wae follow ye!'

The round yellow sun had dropped behind the hills; the evening breezes began to blow; and now could be heard the faint trampling of small hoofs, and the tinkling of tiny bridle-bells: the fairies were trooping over the ground. First of all rode the queen.

"Her skirt was of the grass-green silk,
Her mantle of the velvet fine;
At ilka tress of her horse's mane
Hung fifty silver bells and nine."

But Wild Robin's closed eyes saw nothing;

his sleep-sealed ears heard nothing. The queen of fairies dismounted, stole up to him, and laid her soft fingers on his cheeks.

"Here is a little man after my ain heart," said she: "I like his knitted brow, and the downward curve of his lips. Knights, lift him gently, set him on a red-roan steed, and waft him away to Fairy-land."

Wild Robin was lifted as gently as a brown leaf borne by the wind; he rode as softly as if the red-roan steed had been saddled with satin, and shod with velvet. It even may be that the faint tinkling of the bridle-bells lulled him into a deeper slumber; for when he awoke it was morning in Fairy-land.

Robin sprang from his mossy couch, and stared about him. Where was he? He rubbed his eyes, and looked again. Dreaming, no doubt; but what meant all these nimble little beings bustling hither and thither

in hot haste? What meant these pearl-be-decked caves, scarcely larger than swallows' nests? these green canopies, overgrown with moss? He pinched himself, and gazed again. Countless flowers nodded to him, and seemed, like himself, on tiptoe with curiosity, he thought. He beckoned one of the busy, dwarfish little brownies toward him.

"I ken I'm talking in my sleep," said the lad; "but can ye tell me what dell is this, and how I chanced to be in it?"

The brownie might or might not have heard; but, at any rate, he deigned no reply, and went on with his task, which was pounding seeds in a stone mortar.

"Am I Robin Telfer, of the Valley of Yarrow, and yet canna shake aff my silly dreams?"

"Weel, my lad," quoth the queen of the fairies, giving him a smart tap with her wand,

"stir yersel', and be at work; for naebody idles in Elf-land."

Bewildered Robin ventured a look at the little queen. By daylight she seemed somewhat sleepy and tired; and was withal so tiny, that he might almost have taken her between his thumb and finger, and twirled her above his head; yet she poised herself before him on a mullein-stalk, and looked every inch a queen. Robin found her gaze oppressive; for her eyes were hard and cold and gray, as if they had been little orbs of granite.

"Get ye to work, Wild Robin!"

"What to do?" meekly asked the boy, hungrily glancing at a few kernels of rye which had rolled out of one of the brownie's mortars.

"Are ye hungry, my laddie?" touch a grain of rye if ye dare! Shell these dry

bains; and if so be ye're starving, eat as many as ye can boil in an acorn-cup."

With these words she gave the boy a withered bean-pod, and, summoning a meek little brownie, bade him see that the lad did not over-fill the acorn-cup, and that he did not so much as peck at a grain of rye. Then, glancing sternly at her unhappy prisoner, she withdrew, sweeping after her the long train of her green robe.

The dull days crept by, and still there seemed no hope that Wild Robin would ever escape from his beautiful but detested prison. He had no wings, poor laddie; and he could neither become invisible nor draw himself through a keyhole bodily.

It is true, he had mortal companions: many chubby babies; many bright-eyed boys and girls, whose distracted parents were still seeking them, far and wide, upon

the earth. It would almost seem that the wonders of Fairy-land might make the little prisoners happy. There were countless treasures to be had for the taking, and the very dust in the little streets was precious with specks of gold: but the poor children shivered for the want of a mother's love; they all pined for the dear home-people. If a certain task seemed to them particularly irksome, the heartless queen was sure to find it out, and oblige them to perform it, day after day. If they disliked any article of food, that, and no other, were they forced to eat, or starve.

Wild Robin, loathing his withered beans and unsalted broths, longed intensely for one little breath of fragrant steam from the toothsome parritch on his father's table, one glance at a roasted potato. He was homesick for the gentle sister he had neglected, the

rough brothers whose cheeks he had pelted black and blue; and yearned for the very chinks in the walls, the very thatch on the home-roof.

Gladly would he have given every fairy-flower, at the root of which clung a lump of gold ore, if he might have had his own coverlet "happed" about him once more by the gentle hands he had despised.

"Mither," he whispered in his dreams, "my shoon are worn, and my feet bleed; but I'll soon creep hame, if I can. Keep the parritch warm for me."

Robin was as strong as a mountain-goat; and his strength was put to the task of threshing rye, grinding oats and corn, or drawing water from a brook.

Every night, troops of gay fairies and plodding brownies stole off on a visit to the upper world, leaving Robin and his companions

in ever deeper despair. Poor Robin! he was fain to sing,—

"Oh that my father had ne'er on me smiled!
Oh that my mother had ne'er to me sung!
Oh that my cradle had never been rocked,
But that I had died when I was young!"

Now, there was one good-natured brownie who pitied Robin. When he took a journey to earth with his fellow-brownies, he often threshed rye for the laddie's father, or churned butter in his good mother's dairy, unseen and unsuspected. If the little creature had been watched, and paid for these good offices, he would have left the farm-house forever in sore displeasure.

To homesick Robin he brought news of the family who mourned him as dead. He stole a silky tress of Janet's fair hair, and wondered to see the boy weep over it; for

brotherly affection is a sentiment which never yet penetrated the heart of a brownie. The dull little sprite would gladly have helped the poor lad to his freedom, but told him that only on one night of the year was there the least hope, and that was on Hallow-e'en, when the whole nation of fairies ride in procession through the streets of earth.

So Robin was instructed to spin a dream, which the kind brownie would hum in Janet's ear while she slept. By this means the lassie would not only learn that her brother was in the power of the elves, but would also learn how to release him.

Accordingly, the night before Hallow-e'en, the bonnie Janet dreamed that the long-lost Robin was living in Elf-land, and that he was to pass through the streets with a cavalcade of fairies. But, alas! how should even

a sister know him in the dim starlight, among the passing troops of elfish and mortal riders? The dream assured her that she might let the first company go by, and the second; but Robin would be one of the third: —

"First let pass the black, Janet,
And syne let pass the brown;
But grip ye to the milk-white steed,
And pull the rider down.

For *I* ride on the milk-white steed,
And aye nearest the town:
Because I was a christened lad
They gave me that renown.

My right hand will be gloved, Janet;
My left hand will be bare;
And these the tokens I give thee:
No doubt I will be there.

They'll shape me in your arms, Janet,
A toad, snake, and an eel
But hold me fast, nor let me gang,
As you do love me weel.

'They'll shape me in your arms, Janet,
A dove, bat, and a swan:
Cast your green mantle over me,
I'll be myself again."

The good sister Janet, far from remembering any of the old sins of her brother, wept for joy to know that he was yet among the living. She told no one of her strange dream; but hastened secretly to the Miles Cross, saw the strange cavalcade pricking through the greenwood, and pulled down the rider on the milk-white steed, holding him fast through all his changing shapes. But when she had thrown her green mantle over him, and clasped him in her arms as her own brother

WILD ROBIN.

Page 50.

Robin, the angry voice of the fairy queen was heard: —

'Up then spake the queen of fairies,
Out of a bush of rye,
'You've taken away the bonniest lad
In all my companie.

'Had I but had the wit, yestreen,
That I have learned to-day,
I'd pinned the sister to her bed
E're he'd been won away!'"

However, it was too late now. Wild Robin was safe, and the elves had lost their power over him forever. His forgiving parents and his leal-hearted brothers welcomed him home with more than the old love.

So grateful and happy was the poor laddie, that he nevermore grumbled at his oat-meal parritch, or minded his kye with a scowling brow.

But to the end of his days, when he heard mention of fairies and brownies, his mind wandered off in a mizmaze. He died in peace, and was buried on the banks of the Yarrow.

THE VESPER STAR.

ONCE upon a time, the new moon was shining like a silver bow in the heavens, and the stars glittered and trembled as if they were afraid.

"What frightens you?" said the placid Moon; "be calm, like me."

"I am freezing," answered the North Star; "that is why I shake."

"We are dancing," said the Seven Sisters; "and, watch as closely as you please, you can never get a fair peep at our golden sandals, our feet twinkle so."

"I am sleepy," grumbled the Great Bear; "I am trying to keep my eyes open. Perhaps that is the reason I wink so much."

Thus, with one accord, they made excuses to the pale Moon, who is their guardian,— all but the sweet Vesper Star: she was silent; and when a white cloud floated by, she was glad of an excuse to hide her face.

"Let the North Star shiver, and the Seven Sisters dance, and all the golden stars hold a revel," thought she; "as for me, I am sad."

For you must know that the Vesper Star has a task to perform, and is not allowed to sleep. She keeps vigil over the Earth, by night; and never ceases her watch till the world is up in the morning. For the sick and sad, who cannot sleep, she feels an unutterable pity, so that her heart is always throbbing with sorrow.

The Moon looked at the Vesper Star, and said, "Dream on, sweet sister; for you, the noblest of all, have told me no falsehood."

This the Moon said because she knew that

none of the stars had given a true reason for twinkling so gayly that night. The truth was, they were filled with envy, and were trying to be as brilliant as possible, to compete with a flaming Comet which had just appeared in the sky.

It is not for man to know how long and how peacefully the gentle stars had travelled together, doing the work which God has appointed, without a murmur. But now that this distinguished stranger had arrived, the whole firmament was in dismay. How proudly he strode the heavens! how his blaze illumined the sky! The Stars whispered one to another, and cast angry eyes on the shining wonder.

"Make way for me," he said, sweeping after him a glorious train of light.

"Not I," muttered the fiery Mars.

"Not I," quoth the majestic Jupiter; "I do not move an inch."

The Comet flashed with a lofty disdain.

"Puny Stars," said he, "keep your places, give out all your light, — nobody heeds you; the place of honor is always by the Vesper Star; here I make my throne."

The Vesper Star smiled sadly, but without a twinge of envy.

"Welcome, shining one! Warm me with your fires; let us work together."

"Work!" cried the Comet, throwing out sparkles of scorn; "I was not born to work, but to *shine!*"

"Indeed!" said the Vesper Star; "you have come into strange company, then; for here we all work with a good will." "He does not burn with the true fire," thought the good Star; and she wrapped herself about with a soft cloud, and said no more.

"Oh that I could be set on fire like the Comet!" thought the cold North Star. "I

would gladly burn to death if I could astonish the world with my blaze!"

"Let us die!" said the Seven Sisters; "let us die together; we have ceased to be noticed."

"Ah, hum!" growled the Great Bear; "so many years as I have kept watch in this sky; and now to be set one side by this upstart of a foreigner! I've a great mind to go to sleep and never wake up!"

"Hush!" whispered the Vesper Star gently; "do your duty, and trust God for the rest."

And lo! that very night there was an end of the Comet's splendor.

"Adieu, my dull friends," said he; "I am tired of a quiet life: a little more, and I should fade out entirely!"

Then, with a blaze and a whiz, and a dizzy wheel, he flashed out of the sky; and no one

knew whither he went, or whence he came, any more than the path of the quick lightning.

The stars were ashamed of their envy, and went to their old work with a stronger will and a steadier purpose: but to the Vesper Star was given a brighter and sweeter light than to any other, because she had done her work without envy and without repining.

THE WATER-KELPIE.

ONCE there lived under the earth a race of fairies called gnomes. They were strange little beings, with dull eyes and harsh voices; but they did no harm, and lived in peace.

They never saw the sun; but they had lamps much brighter than our gaslight, which burned night and day, year after year.

They had music; but it was the tinkling of silver bells and golden harps, — not half so sweet as the singing of birds and the babbling of brooks.

Flowers they had none, but plenty of gems, — "the stars of earth." There were green trees in the kingdom: but the leaves

were hard emeralds; and the fruit, apples of gold or cherries of ruby; and these precious gems the gnomes ground to powder, and swallowed with much satisfaction.

They heaped up piles of gold and diamonds as high as your head; and never was there a gnome so poor as to build a house of any thing a whit coarser than jasper or onyx. You would have believed yourself dreaming, if you could have walked through the streets of their cities. They were paved with rosy almandine and snowy alabaster; and the palaces glittered in the gay lamplight like a million stars.

These gnomes led, for the most part, rather dull lives. Like their cousins, the water-sprites, or undines, they were roguish and shrewd, but had no higher views of life than our katydids and crickets. Indeed, they hardly cared for any thing but frisking

about, eating and sleeping. But, after all, what can be expected of creatures without souls? One sees, now and seen, stupid human beings, whose eyes have no thoughts in them, and whose souls seem to be sound asleep. Such lumps of dulness might almost as well be gnomes, and slip into the earth and have done with it.

These underground folk had a great horror of our world. They knew all about it; for one of them had peeped out and taken a bird's-eye view. He went up very bravely, but hurried back with such strange accounts, that his friends considered him a little insane.

"Listen!" said the gnome, whose name was Clod. "The earth has a soft carpet, of a new kind of emerald; overhead is a blue roof, made of turquoise; but I am told that there is a crack in it, and sometimes water comes pouring down in torrents. But the worst

plague of all is a great glaring eyeball of fire, which mortals call the sun."

When Clod told his stories of the earth, he always ended by saying, —

"Believe me, it is bad luck to have the sun shine on you. It nearly put my eyes out; and I have had the headache ever since."

Now, there was a young girl, named Moneta, who listened very eagerly to the old gnome's stories of the earth, and thought she would like to see it for herself. She was a kind little maiden, as playful as a kitten; and her friends were not willing she should go. But Moneta had somewhere heard that fairies who marry mortals receive the gift of a human soul: so, in spite of all objections, she was resolved to take the journey; for she had in her dark mind some vague aspirations after a higher state of being.

Then the gnome-family declared, that, if she once went away, they would never allow her to return; for they highly disapproved of running backward and forward between the two worlds, gossiping.

"Have you no love of country," cried they, "that you would willingly cast your lot among silly creatures who look down upon your race?"

The old gnome, who had travelled, took the romantic maiden one side, and said, —

"My dear Moneta, since you *will* go, I must tell you a secret; for you remember I have seen the world, and know all about it. Mortals are a higher race than ourselves, it is true; but that is only because they live atop o' the earth, while we are under their feet. They make a great parade about their little ticking jewel they call Conscience; but, after all, they will any of them sell it for one of

our ear-rings! I assure you they love money better than their own souls; and I would advise you, as a friend that has seen the world, to load yourself with as much gold as you can carry."

So Moneta donned a heavy dress of spun gold, which was woven in such a manner, that, at every motion she made, it let fall a shower of gold-dust. She filled the sleeves with sardonyx, almandine, and amethyst; and hid in her bosom diamonds and sapphires enough to purchase a kingdom.

Then she went up a steep ladder, and knocked on the alabaster ceiling, using the charm which the gnome had given her: —

"Mother Earth, Mother Earth, set me free!"

At her words there was a sound as of an earthquake, and a little space was made, just large enough for her to crawl through.

When she had reached the top, the earth closed again, and she was left seated upon a rock; and the light of the sun was so dazzling, that she hid her face in her hands.

Thus she sat for a long time, not knowing whither to go, till a young man chanced to come that way, who said, "What do you here?"

She raised her face at his words, and could not speak, so great was her surprise at the beauty of the strange youth. He, for his part, could not help smiling; for she was as yellow as an orange; and an uglier little creature he had never beheld: but he said in a kind voice, —

"Come with me to my mother's house, and you shall be refreshed with cake and wine."

She arose to follow him; and, as she walked, a bright shower of gold-dust sprinkled the earth at every step.

The young man held out his hands eagerly to catch the shining spray, thinking he would like such a rarely-gifted damsel for his wife; and, in truth, he smiled so sweetly, and dropped such winning words, that in time he won her heart and she became his bride.

"And, when she cam' into the kirk,
She shimmered like the sun;
The belt that was about her waist
Was a' with pearles bedone."

So great was her love for him, that she forgot her lost home under the earth; and every day, when she bade her husband "good-morning," she placed in his hand a precious stone; and he kissed her, calling her his "dear Moneta," his "heart's jewel." But at last the diamonds, sapphires, and rubies were all gone; and she was also losing the power of shedding gold-dust. Then her

husband frowned on her, and no longer called her his "heart's jewel," or his "dear Moneta."

At length she presented him with a little daughter as lovely as a water-sprite, with hair like threads of gold. Now the father watched the babe with a greedy eye; for its mother had wept precious tears of molten gold before she received the gift of human grief, and he hoped her child would do the same; but, when he found it was only a common mortal, he shut his heart against the babe. Moneta was no longer yellow and ugly, but very beautiful; with deep eyes, out of which looked a sweet soul: yet she had lost her fairy gifts, and her husband had ceased to love her. The good woman mourned in secret; and would have wished to die, only her precious child comforted her heart.

One day, as she was sitting by the shore of the lake, a water-kelpie saw her weeping and came to her in the form of a white-haired old man, saying, —

"Charming lady! why do you weep? Come with me to my kingdom under the waters. My people are always happy."

Then she looked where he bade her, and saw, afar down under the waters, a beautiful city, whose streets were paved with red and white coral.

The kelpie said, "Will you go down?"

"No," sighed Moneta, thinking of the kind words her husband had sometimes spoken to her: "I cannot go yet."

But the kelpie came every day, repeating the question, "Will you go now?" and she answered, "I cannot go yet."

But at last her husband said, —

"How often the thought comes to me, If

I had no wife and child, all this gold would be mine!" and he knitted his brows with a frown.

Then Moneta looked in his face, and said, —

"Dear Ivan, I have loved you truly; but you no longer care for Moneta. I will go away with the little child, and all our gold shall be yours. Farewell!"

Then she embraced him with falling tears. His heart was stirred within him; and he would have followed her, only he knew not which way she had gone.

Soon the water-kelpie came to him in the form of a horse; and ran before him, neighing fiercely, and breathing fire from his mouth. This is the way kelpies take to announce the fact that some one has gone under the water.

So the man followed the kelpie. His heart

was swelling with grief; and all his love for his wife and child had come back to him.

He looked into the lake, and saw the fair city. In a transparent palace Moneta was sitting, crowned with pearls, the child sleeping on her bosom. He shouted, —

"Come back, O Moneta!" but she heard him not.

He went every day to the same spot, never leaving it until the water was clear, and he had seen his wife and child. He cared no more for his fine castle and his gold; for the castle was empty, and the gold could not speak.

"Alas," cried he, "if I could listen to the music of Moneta's voice! if I could hold the child in my arms once more!"

Now he cared for nothing but to gaze into the waters at Moneta and her child.

One day, the water-kelpie appeared to him in the form of an old man.

"Why sit you here, sighing like the north wind?" said the kelpie.

"I have loved gold better than my best friends," replied Ivan; "and now my best friends are taken away from me, and the gold is left; but I love it no longer."

"Ah, ah!" growled the kelpie; "I have heard of such men as you: nothing is dear till it is missed. You should have thought of that before. If your lost ones were to return, you would treat them as badly as ever, no doubt."

"No no," groaned Ivan; "I would love them better than all the wealth in the world! I would love them better than my own life! Ah, the sting it is to think of my own ingratitude!"

"Hold!" said the kelpie: "grumble to yourself if you like, but don't vex my ears with your complaints. Suppose I were to

bring back Moneta and the child,— would you give me your chests of gold?"

"That I will," cried the man, "right joyfully."

"Not so fast: will you give me your castle as well?"

"Ah, yes, castle and gold; take them, and welcome."

"Not so fast: Moneta and her child are worth more than these. Will you give me the castle and gold, and ten years of your life?"

"With all my heart."

"Then," said the kelpie "go home, and to-morrow you shall see Moneta and her child."

When the morrow came, the husband and wife wept for joy at meeting once more; and Ivan said,—

"Can you forgive me, dearest Moneta?"

Moneta had already forgiven him; and the three — father, mother, and child — loved one another, and were content to the end of their lives; and Ivan said, —

"Once for all I have found that gold cannot make one happy; but, with the blessing of a clear conscience, warm hearts and loving words are the sweetest things in life."

THE LOST SYLPHID.

"I tell the tale as 'twas told to me."

I HAVE heard that one night, on a distant shore, a band of water-nixies were dancing to gentle music, their golden sandals twinkling like stars.

A lord and lady were walking on the same shore. The lord's eyes were bent on the ground; but his wife paused, and said, —

"Listen, my lord, to that enchanting music!"

"I hear no music," he replied, laughing. 'You must wake up, dear wife.

"With half-shut eyes, ever you seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream.'"

"But, my lord, those exquisite beings in gossamer robes! surely you see them!"

"I see the play of the moonbeams, my love, and nothing more."

But the wife stood transfixed. One beautiful fairy, taller and fairer than her companions, had wings, and floated through the dance, scarcely touching the earth.

"Was ever such a vision of lovliness?" cried the enraptured lady: "she must be my own little daughter,— eat of my bread, and sleep upon my bosom."

Then, kneeling, she sang,—

"Fair little nixies, that dwell near the water,
Give me the winged one to be my own daughter."

The dance ceased. The nixies, bewildered, looked north and south, and knew not which way to flee; but the winged fairy, attracted by the human love in the lady's

eyes, glided slowly forward. Then the nixies stormed in fierce wrath, their willowy figures swaying to and fro as if blown by the wind.

"They shall not harm you, little one. Come with me, be my own daughter, and I will carry you home."

"Home!" echoed the lovely child; "my home is in the Summer-land. Oh, will you indeed carry me there?"

Then she folded her white wings, and nestled in the lady's bosom like a gentle dove, and was borne to a beautiful castle that overlooked the sea. The water-nixies soon forgot her, for they could not hold her memory in their little humming-bird hearts.

She was not of their race. Her wings were soft and transparent, like those of a white butterfly; and she ever declared that she had once alighted from a cloud, and been

caught in a nixie's net spread upon the grass.

But, in time, her wings dwindled and disappeared; and then the lord, who was now her father, could not remember that she had ever been other than an earthly child.

"You fancy you were once a sylphid," said he; "but there are no sylphids, my sweet one, and there is no Summer-land."

The child became as dear to the lord and lady as their very heart's blood; and they forgot her foreign birth, and almost believed, as all the world did, that she was their own little daughter. But the child did not forget. She longed for the true home she had left; but whither should she go to seek it?

"Dear papa," said she, one day, "I beg you will not say again there are no sylphids; for I remember so well how I spread my

wings and flew. It was glorious to see the clouds float under my feet!"

"Very well," said the lord; "if you like, I will say there are sylphids in the air, and trolls inside the earth; and, once on a time, I was myself a great white butterfly: do you remember chasing me over a bed of roses?"

"O papa, now you laugh! I love the twinkle in your eye; and I am so glad it is you, and no one else, who is my papa; but just the same, and forevermore, I shall keep saying, *I was a sylphid!*"

Sometimes, when she set her white teeth into some delicious fruit, she said with dreamy eyes,—

"These grapes of Samarcand came across the seas; but they are not so sweet as the fruit in my own garden, mamma."

"And where is your garden, my child?"

"Oh, in the Summer-land. I always forget

that you have never seen it. When I go there again, mamma, I will certainly take you too; for I love you with all my heart. I can never go without you."

When she heard the evening-bells from the minster, she said, "Oh, they are like the joy-bells at home, only not so sweet. Nothing, here, is so sweet. Even my dear mamma is not so lovely as the lady who comes when I am asleep."

Little One — they called her Little One for the want of a name — loved to prattle about the wonders of that mysterious fairy-land, which no one but herself had ever seen. Her mother would not check her, but let her tell her pretty visions of remembered rainbows, and palaces, and precious gems. She said, —

"The child has such a vivid fancy! It is not all of us who can see pictures when our eyes are shut."

But the lord was not so well pleased; and once, when his daughter looked at a frozen stream and murmured, "*We* have the *happiest* rivers at home; they sing all day long, all the year, without freezing! Can I find that Summer-land again! Oh, I would creep all over the world to seek it," he replied, —

"Little One, it is some cloud-city you are thinking of, some dream-land, or isle of Long Ago, which you will never see again. I beg you to forget these wild fancies."

But still the child dreamed on. Once she heard the glad song of the Hyperboreans: —

"I come from a land in the sun-bright deep,
Where golden gardens glow;
Where the winds of the North, becalmed in sleep,
Their conch-shells never blow."

She clapped her hands, murmuring to herself, —

"*There* is my home! I think I remember now it *was* 'a land in the sun-bright deep!'"

So, when she journeyed with her parents to distant countries, she always hoped that some ship would bear her away to the Happy Isles; and when they once touched a bright shore, and some one cried, "The isles of Greece! the isles of Greece!" she thought she was home at last, and hardly dared look at the remembered shore. But, alas, she had not yet reached the Summer-land: this was not her home.

Then she heard her father say that the jewels she wore had been brought up from the deep places under the earth.

"I wonder I had not thought of that," she said to herself. "Since there are such beautiful gems in my lost home, it must lie under the earth. No doubt if I could only find the

right cave, and walk in it far enough' I should come to the Summer-land."

So she set out, one day, in wild haste, but only lost herself in a deep cavern; and, when she found daylight again, she was all alone upon the face of the earth. Her father and mother were nowhere to be seen. She shouted their names, and ran to and fro seeking them till her strength was all spent. It was growing dark; and Little One could only creep under a shelter, and weep herself asleep.

Next morning it was no better, but far worse. Her wretched parents had gone home, believing her drowned in the sea. Poor Little One was now all alone in the world, and her heart ached with the cold. Kind friends gave her food and shelter, and her clothing was warm as warm could be; still her heart ached with the cold. People

praised her beauty so much that she dared not look up to let them see how lovely she was; but she had lost both her father and mother, and her heart ached and ached. She thought winter was coming on; and the world was growing so chilly, that now she must certainly set out for the Summer-land. Then she said, —

"If I am a sylphid, perhaps my home is over the hills, and far away. Yes: I think it must be in the country where the music goes."

For she thought, when she heard music, that it seemed to hover and float over the earth, and lose itself in the sky; so she began to set her face toward the country where the music goes. But, though she gazed till her eyes ached, she never saw her long-lost home, nor so much as a glimpse of one of its spires.

One night, after gazing and weeping till she could scarcely see, and had no tears left, the bright being who visited her dreams came and whispered, —

"If there be a land so fair
O'er the mountain shining,
You will never enter there
By looking up and pining."

"Dear me! then what shall I do?" said Little One, clasping her hands. "I am tired of the dropping rain, and the bleak winds; I have lost my father and mother; I long to go home to the Summer-land."

"There are hills to climb, and streams to cross," said the fairy.

"But I have stout shoes," laughed Little One.

"There are thorns and briers all along the road."

"But I can bear to be pricked."

"Then I will guide you," said the fairy.

"How can that be?" cried the child. "You come to me in dreams; but by daylight I cannot see so much as the tips of your wings."

"Listen, and you will hear my voice," replied the fairy. "Set out toward the East, at dawn, to-morrow, and I will be with you."

When Little One awoke, the sun was rising, and she said, —

"Oh that golden gate! The sun has left it open: do you see it, beautiful lady?"

"I see it," whispered the fairy: "I am close beside you."

"Then," said Little One, fastening her dress, and putting on all the jewels she could possibly carry, "I think I will set out at once; for, if I make all speed, I may reach the Summer-land before that golden gate is closed."

She pressed on, as the fairy directed, up a steep hill, her eyes fixed on the glowing eastern sky. But, as the sun strode up higher, the morning clouds melted away.

"Where is my golden gate?" cried the child.

"Weeping so soon?" whispered the fairy.

"Do not scold me, dear Whisper," moaned the child; "you know I have lost my kind father and mother; and the thorns prick me; and then this is such a lonely road; there is nobody to be seen."

The truth was, there were children gathering strawberries on the hill, and old women digging herbs; but Little One did not see them, for she was all the while watching the sky. But she was soon obliged to pause, and take breath.

"Look about you," said the Whisper, "you may see some one as unhappy as yourself."

The child looked, and saw a little girl driving a goat; while large tears trickled down her cheeks, and moistened her tattered dress. For a moment, Little One's heart ceased aching with its own troubles.

"What is your name, little girl?" said she: "and why do you weep?"

"My name is Poor Dorel," replied the child; "my father and mother are long since dead; and I have nothing to eat but goat's milk and strawberries:" and, as she spoke, the large tears started afresh.

"Poor Dorel! you are the first one I ever saw who had as much trouble as I. I, too, have lost a father and mother."

"Were they a king and queen?" asked Dorel, wiping her eyes, and gazing at Little One's beautiful dress and glittering ornaments.

"They loved me dearly," replied Little

One sadly; "yet I never heard that they were king and queen. Come with me, darling Dorel!" I never before saw any one who was hungry. Come with me! I live in a country where there is food enough for everybody."

"Where is that?" said Dorel, eagerly.

"I do not quite know, little girl; but it is not in the bosom of the earth, and it is not in the sun-bright deep: so I suppose it is over the hills, and far away."

"Now I know who you are," said Dorel. "You are the *lost sylphid;* and people say you have travelled all over the world. But, if you do not know the way home, pray how can you tell which road to take?"

"Oh! I have a guide, — a beautiful fairy, called Whisper: she shows me every step of the way. I wish you would go too, little Dorel!"

"I think I will not, little Sylphid; for, if you have only a Whisper for a guide, I do not believe you will ever get there; but, oh, you are very, very beautiful!"

"If you will not go," said Little One, "let me, at least, give you a few of my jewels: you can sell them for bread."

So saying, she took from her girdle some turquoise ornaments, and placed them in Dorel's hand with a kiss which had her whole heart in it.

"Now I love you," said Dorel; "but more for the kiss than any thing else; and I am going before you to cut down the thorns that shoot out by the wayside. I am a little mountain-girl, and know how to use the pruning-knife."

Little One danced for joy. She found she could now walk with wonderful ease; for not only were there no more sharp thorns to

prick her, but her heart was also full of a new love, which made the whole world look beautiful.

"You see the way is growing easier," said the Whisper.

> "Pour out thy love like the rush of a river,
> Wasting its waters forever and ever."

"So I will," said Little One. "Is there any one else to love?"

By and by she met an old woman, bent nearly double, and picking up dry sticks with trembling hands.

"Poor woman!" said Little One: "I am going to love you."

"Dear me!" said the old crone, dropping her sticks, and looking up with surprise in every wrinkle: "you don't mean *me?* Why, my heart is all dried up."

"Then you need to be loved all the more," cried Little One heartily.

"Poor Woman!" said Little One.

Page 90.

The poor woman laughed; but, at the same time, brushed a tear from her eye with the corner of her apron.

"I thought," said Little One, "I was the only unhappy one in the world: it seemed a pity my heart should ache so much; but, oh, I would rather have it ache than be dried up!"

"I suppose you never were beaten," said the old woman; "you were never pelted with whizzing stones?"

"Indeed I never, never was!" replied Little One, greatly shocked by the question.

"By your costly dress, I know you never were so poor as to be always longing for food. Let me tell you, my good child, when one is beaten and scolded, and feels cold all winter, and hungry all summer, it is no wonder one's heart dries up!"

Little One threw her arms about the old

woman's neck. "Let me help you pick sticks!" said she; "you are too old for hard work; your hands tremble too much."

Swiftly gathering up a load of fagots, she put them together in a bundle.

"Now, how many jewels shall I give her?" thought the child. "She must never want for food again."

"How many?" echoed the Whisper.

> "Give as the morning that flows out of heaven:
> Give as the free air and sunshine are given."

"Then she shall have half," said Little One in great glee. "Here, poor woman, take these sapphires and rubies and diamonds, and never be hungry again!"

"Heavenly child!" said the stranger, laying her wasted hand on the sylphid's bright head, and blessing her, "it is little except thanks that an old creature like me can give;

yet may be you will not scorn this pair of little shoes: they are strong, and, when you have to step on the sharp mountain-rocks, they will serve you well."

Little One's delicate slippers were already much worn, and she gladly exchanged them for the goat-skin shoes; but, strange to relate, no sooner had she done so than she found herself flitting over rocks and rough places with perfect ease, and at such speed, that, when she looked back, in a moment, she had already left the old woman far behind, and out of sight. They were magical shoes; but, no matter how fast they skimmed over the ground, Dorel, out of pure love, continued to go before, talking and laughing and smoothing the way.

One by one Little One sold her jewels to buy bread, which she shared with all the needy she chanced to meet. After many

days there remained but one gem; and she wept because she had no more to give. But, through her tears, she now, for the first time, fancied she could see the spires and turrets of her beautiful home, though, as yet, very far off.

"How fast I have come!" said she, laughing with delight. "But for these magical shoes, and Dorel's pruning-knife, I should have been even now struggling at the foot of the hill."

Then she looked down at her torn dress.

"What a sad plight I am in! no one will know me when I get home!"

"Never fear!" said the fairy: "you are sure to be welcome."

Little One now held up her last jewel in the sunlight, while a starving boy looked at it with eager eyes.

"Take it!" said she, weeping with the ten-

derest pity. "I only wish it were a diamond instead of a ruby, — a diamond as large as my heart!"

The boy blessed her with a tremulous voice. Little One pressed on, singing softly to herself, till she came to a frightful chasm, full of water.

"How shall I ever cross it!" she cried in alarm.

"May I help you, fair Sylphid?" said the grateful boy to whom she had given her last jewel. "I can make a bridge in the twinkling of an eye."

So saying, he threw across the roaring torrent a film which looked as frail as any spider's web.

"It will bear you," said the Whisper: "do not be afraid!"

So Little One ventured upon the gossamer bridge, which was to the eye as delicate as

mist; but to the feet as strong as adamant. She hushed her fears, and walked over it with a stout heart.

Now, she was on the borders of the Summer-land. Here were the turrets and spires, the soft white clouds, the green fields, and sunny streams. Instantly her long-lost wings appeared again; and she spread them like a happy bird, and flew home. Oh, it was worth years of longing and pain! She was held in tender embraces, and kissed lovingly by well-remembered friends. To her great surprise and delight, her father and mother were both there they had arrived at the Summer-land while seeking their Little One.

"Now I know," said her father, "that my daughter was not dreaming when she longed for her remembered home."

Little One looked at her soiled dress; but the stains had disappeared; and, most won-

derful! all the jewels she had worn on her neck and arms, and in her girdle, were there yet, burning with increased brilliancy. Little One gazed again, and counted to see if any were missing. Yes: two she had sold for bread were not there. It was the jewels she had *given away* which had come back in some mysterious manner and were more resplendent than before.

"Ah!" said she, with a beaming smile, "now I know what it means when they say, 'All you give, you will carry with you.' It was delightful to scatter my gems by the wayside; but I did not think they would all be given back to me when I reached home!"

Then, intwining arms with a bright sylphid, she flew with her over the gardens in a trance of delight.

"Here," said Little One, "is my own dear garden. I remember the border and the

paths right well; but it never bore such golden fruit, it never glowed with such beautiful flowers."

"Your fairy, the one you call Whisper, has taken care of it for your sake," said the sister sylphid. "Do you know that those flowers, and those trees with fruit like 'bonny beaten gold,' have been watered by your tears, Little One? It is in this way they have attained their matchless beauty and grace."

"*My tears*, little sister?"

"Yes, your tears. Every one you shed upon earth, your fairy most carefully preserved; and see what wonders have been wrought!"

"If I had known that," said Little One clapping her hands, "I would have been *glad* of all my troubles! I would have smiled through my tears!"

Now I know no more than I have told of this story of the Lost Sylphid. I tell the tale as 'twas told to me; and I wish, with all my heart, it were true.

THE CASTLE OF GEMS.

Once upon a time, though I cannot tell when, and in what country I do not now remember, there lived a maiden as fair as a lily, as gentle as a dewdrop, and as modest as a violet. A pure, sweet name she had, — it was Blanche.

She stood one evening, with her friend Victor, by the shore of a lake. Never had the youth or maiden seen the moonlight so enchanting; but they did not know

> "It was midsummer day,
> When all the fairy people
> From elf-land come away."

Presently, while they gazed at the lake, which shone like liquid emerald and sapphire

and topaz, a boat, laden with strangely beautiful beings, glided towards them across the waters. The fair voyagers were clad in robes of misty blue with white mantles about their waists, and on their heads wreaths of valley-lilies.

They were all as fair as need be; but fairest of all was the helms-woman, the queen of the fairies. Her face was soft and clear like moonlight; and she wore a crown of nine large diamonds, which refracted the evening rays, and formed nine lunar rainbows.

The fairies were singing a roundelay; and, as the melody floated over the waters, Victor and Blanche listened with throbbing hearts. Fairy music has almost passed away from the earth; but those who hear it are strangely moved, and have dreams of beautiful things which have been, and may be again.

"It makes me think of the days of long

ago when there was no sin," whispered Blanche.

"It makes me long to be a hero," answered Victor with a sparkling eye.

All the while the pearly boat was drifting toward the youth and maiden; and, when it had touched the shore, the queen stepped out upon the land as lightly as if she had been made entirely of dewdrops.

"I am Fontana," said she; "and is this Blanche?"

She laid her soft hand upon the maiden's shoulder; and Blanche thought she would like to die then and there, so full was she of joy.

"I have heard of thy good heart, my maiden: now what would please thee most?" said the queen.

Blanche bowed her head, and dared not speak.

Queen Fontana smiled: when she smiled it was as if a soft cloud had slid away from the moon, revealing a beautiful light.

"Say pearls and diamonds," said Victor in her ear.

"I don't know," whispered Blanche: "they are not the best things."

"No," said the queen kindly: "pearls and diamonds are *not* the best things."

Then Blanche knew that her whisper had been overheard, and she hid her face in her hands for shame. But the queen only smiled down on her, and, without speaking, dropped into the ground a little seed. Right at the feet of Blanche, it fell; and, in a moment, two green leaves shot upward, and between them a spotless lily, which hung its head with modest grace.

Victor gazed at the perfect flower in wonder, and, before he knew it, said aloud, "Ah, how like Blanche!"

The queen herself broke it from the stem, and gave it to the maiden, saying, —

"Take it! it is my choicest gift. Till it fades (which will never be), love will be thine; and, in time to come, it will have power to open the strongest locks, and swing back the heaviest doors.

'Gates of brass cannot withstand
One touch of this magic wand.'"

Blanche looked up to thank the queen; but no words came, — only tears.

"I see a wish in thine eyes" said Fontana.

"It is for Victor," faltered Blanche, at last: "he wishes to be rich and great."

The queen looked grave.

"Shall I make him one of the great men of the earth, little Blanche? Then he may

one day go to the ends of the world, and forget thee."

Blanche only smiled, and Victor's cheek flushed.

"I shall be a great man," said he, — "perhaps a prince; but, where I go, Blanche shall go: she will be my wife."

"That is well," said the queen: "never forget Blanche, for her love will be your dearest blessing."

Then, removing from her girdle a pair of spectacles, she placed them in the youth's hand. He drew back in surprise. "Does she take me for an old man?" thought he. He had expected a casket of gems at least; perhaps a crown.

"Wait," said Fontana: "they are the eyes of Wisdom. When you have learned their use, you will not despise my gift. Keep a pure heart, and always remember Blanche. And now farewell!"

So saying, she moved on to the boat, floating over the ground as softly as a creeping mist.

When Blanche awoke next morning, her first thought was, "Happy are the maidens who have sweet dreams!" for she thought she had only been wandering in a midsummer's night's dream; so, when she saw her lily in the broken pitcher where she had placed it, great was her delight. But a change had come over it during the night. It was no longer a common lily, — its petals were large pearls, and the green leaves were now green emeralds. This strange thing had happened to the flower, that it might never fade.

After this, people looked at Blanche, and said, "How is it? she grows fairer every day!" and every one loved her; for the human heart has no choice but to love what is good and gentle.

As for Victor, he at first put on his spectacles with a scornful smile: but, when he had worn them a moment, he found them very wonderful things. When he looked through them, he could see people's thoughts written out on their faces; he could easily decipher the fine writing which you see traced on green leaves; and found there were long stories written on pebbles in little black and gray dots.

When he wore the spectacles, he looked so wise, that Blanche hardly dared speak to him. She saw that one day he was to become a great man.

At last Victor said he must leave his home, and sail across the seas. Tears filled the eyes of Blanche; but the youth whispered, —

"I am going away to find a home for you and me: so adieu, dearest Blanche!"

Now Victor thought the ship in which he sailed moved very slowly; for he longed to reach the land which he could see through his magic spectacles: it was a beautiful kingdom, rich with mines of gold and silver.

When the ship touched shore, the streets were lined with people who walked to and fro with sad faces. The king's daughter, a beautiful young maiden, was very ill; and it was feared she must die.

Victor asked one of the people if there was no hope.

It so happened that this man was the greatest physician in the kingdom and he answered, —

"Alas, there is no hope!"

Then Victor went to a distant forest where he knew a healing spring was to be found. Very few remembered it was there; and those who had seen it did not know of its power to heal disease.

Victor filled a crystal goblet with the precious water, and carried it to the palace. The old king shook his head sadly, but consented to let the attendants moisten the parched lips of the princess with the water, as it could do no harm. Far from doing harm, it wrought a great good; and, in time, the royal maiden was restored to health.

Then, for gratitude, the king would have given his daughter to Victor for a wife; but Victor remembered Blanche, and knew that no other maiden must be bride of his.

Not long after this, the king was lost overboard at sea during a storm. Now the people must have a new ruler. They determined to choose a wise and brave man; and, young as he was, no man could be found braver and wiser than Victor: so the people elected him for their king. Thus Fontana's gift of the eyes of Wisdom had made him truly "one of the great men of earth."

In her humble home, Blanche dreamed every night of Victor, and hoped he would grow good, if he did not become great; and Victor remembered Blanche, and knew that her love was his dearest blessing.

"This old palace," thought he "will never do for my beautiful bride."

So he called together his people, and told them he must have a castle of gems. Some of the walls were to be of rubies, some of emeralds, some of pearls. There was to be any amount of beaten gold for doors and pillars; and the ceilings were to be of milk-white opals, with a rosy light which comes and goes.

All was done as he desired; and, when the castle of gems was finished, it would need a pen of jasponyx dipped in rainbows to describe it.

Victor thought he would not have a guard

of soldiers for his castle, but would lock the four golden gates with a magic key, so that no one could enter unless the gates should swing back of their own accord.

When the castle of gems was just completed, and not a soul was in it, Victor locked the gates with a magic key, and then dropped the key into the ocean.

"Now," thought he, "I have done a wise thing. None but the good and true can enter my castle of gems. The gates will not swing open for men with base thoughts or proud hearts!"

Then he hid himself under the shadow of a tree, and watched the people trying to enter. But they were proud men, and so the gates would not open.

King Victor laughed, and said to himself, —

"I have done a wise thing with my magic

key. How safe I shall be in my castle of gems!"

So he stepped out of his hiding-place, and said to the people, —

"None but the good and true can get in."

Then he tried to go in himself; but the gates would not move.

The king bowed his head in shame, and walked back to his old palace.

"Alas!" said he to himself, "wise and great as I am, I thought *I* could go in. I see it must be because I am filled with pride. Let me hide my face; for what would Blanche say if she knew, that, because my heart is proud, I am shut out of my own castle? I am not worthy that she should love me; but I hope I shall learn of her to be humble and good."

The next day he sailed for the home of his childhood. When Blanche saw him, she

blushed, and cast down her eyes; but Victor knew they were full of tears of joy. He held her hand, and whispered, —

"Will you go with me and be my bride, beautiful Blanche?"

"I will go with you," she answered softly; and Victor's heart rejoiced.

All the while Blanche never dreamed that he was a great prince, and that the men who came with him were his courtiers.

When they reached Victor's kingdom, and the people shouted "Long live the queen!" Blanche veiled her face, and trembled; for Victor whispered in her ear that the shouts were for her. And, as the people saw her beautiful face through her gossamer veil, they cried all the more loudly, —

"Long live Queen Blanche! Thrice welcome, fair lady!"

The sun was sinking in the west, and his

rays fell with dazzling splendor upon the castle of gems. When Blanche saw the silent, closed castle and its golden gates, she remembered the words of Queen Fontana, who had said that her lily should have power to "open the strongest locks, and swing back the heaviest doors."

Like one walking in a dream, she led Victor toward the resplendent castle. She touched, with her lily, the lock which fastened one of the gates.

> "Gates of gold could not withstand
> One touch of that magic wand."

In an instant, the hinges trembled; and the massive door swung open so far, that forty people could walk in side by side. Then it slowly closed, and locked itself without noise.

One of the people who passed in was the

king, whose heart was no longer proud. The others, who had entered unwittingly, could not speak for wonder. Some of them were poor, and some were lame or blind; but all were good and true.

At the rising of the moon a wonderful thing came to pass. The people entered the castle of gems, and became beautiful. This was through the power of the magic lily.

Now there were no more crooked backs and lame feet and sightless eyes; and the king looked at these people, who were beautiful as well as good, and declared he would have them live in the castle; and the gentlemen should be knights; and the ladies, maids of honor.

To this day Victor and Blanche rule the kingdom; and such is the charm of the lily, — so like the pure heart of the queen, — that the people are becoming gentle and good.

Until Queen Fontana shall call for the magic spectacles and the lily of pearl, it is believed that Victor and Blanche will live in the castle of gems, though the time should be a hundred years.

THE ELF OF LIGHT.

A NORSE TALE.

In the strange island of Iceland, thrown up, by fire, from the depths of the sea, there once lived a lad who worshipped the god Odin, and was taught from two absurd books called the Eddas. He wished to fight and die on a battle-field, so that his soul might cross a rainbow-bridge, and dwell in the beautiful halls of Valhalla. There — so the Eddas say — are the chosen heroes, who are forever fighting all day, and feasting all night.

Thus, instead of a Bible, young Thule studied wild fairy-tales; yet. for all his hea-

thenish training, he had some noble traits, which a Christian lad might imitate.

He lived with his widowed mother at the edge of a forest. The snow piled itself in drifts, and the wind howled through the trees, and crept in at the windows; for the cottage was old, and a blind hurricane might almost have mistaken it for a heap of brush-wood. But Thule was quite as happy as if the hut had been a palace. He loved the winter-beauty of his mother's face, and the silvery hair half hidden under her black cap. All the fire they burned was made of the dry sticks he gathered in the forest, and more than half the money they used was earned by his small hands.

In one of the ice-months of the year, when the weather was sharper than a serpent's tooth, Thule came home from a hard day's work; and, the chillier he grew, the more he

whistled to keep up a brave heart. Looking at the horizon before him, he saw the cold glare which we call Northern Lights, but which he knew to be the flickering of hel mets and shields and spears.

"The warlike maidens are out to-night," thought the boy: "they are going to the battle-fields to decide who is worthy to be slain. How I love to see the sky lighted up with the flash of their armor! Odin, grant I may one day be a hero, and walk over the bridge of a rainbow!"

Then Thule went to his whistling again; but, just as he struck into the forest where the deep shadows lay, he heard a faint moan, which sounded like a human voice, or might have been a sudden gust of wind in a hollow tree.

"Perchance it is some poor creature even colder than I," thought the boy: "I hope not a *troll!*"

Hurrying to the spot whence the sound came, he found an ugly, long-nosed dwarf lying on the ground, nearly perishing with cold. It was growing late, and the boy himself was benumbed; but he went briskly to work, chafing the hands and face of the stranger, even taking off his own blue jacket to wrap it about the dwarf's neck.

"Poor old soul, you shall not die of cold!" said he; then, helping him to rise, he added cheerily, "We will go to my mother's cottage, and have a warm supper of oat-cakes and herrings; and our fire of dry boughs will do you good."

The noble boy knew there was barely supper enough for two, but did not mind going hungry to bed for charity's sake. In the ear of his heart, he heard the words of his mother: —

"Never fear starving, my son, but freely share your last loaf with the needy."

They walked through the forest, the old man leaning heavily on the youth's shoulder.

"Why should you befriend a poor wretch who cannot repay you?" whined the dwarf in a hollow voice which startled Thule, it was so like the echo sent back by a mountain or a rock.

"I do not ask or wish to be repaid," was the reply. "Don't you know what the proverb says? 'Do good, and throw it into the sea; if the fishes don't know it, *Odin* will!'"

"Yes: Odin shall know it, never fear," answered the dwarf; "but, as I happen to be informed that your tea-table is not quite large enough for three, I think I will decline your invitation to supper. Really, my lad," he continued, "it would delight me to do you a little favor; for, though I am only a poor dwarf, I know how to be grateful. By the way, have you seen such a thing hereabouts as a green alder-tree?"

"A green alder-tree in winter-time!" cried Thule.

"A curious thing, indeed," said the dwarf; "but I chanced to see one the other night in my rambles. Ah! look, here it is right before your eyes."

All the other forest-trees were dry and hard, their hearts frozen within them; but this tree was alive, hidden behind a clump of firs. When Thule began to dig about its roots, it seemed to come out of the ground of its own free will, and to lie over his shoulders as if it would caress him.

"Take home the little tree, and plant it before your door, my lad."

The youth turned to thank the stranger; but he had vanished. Then Thule ran home with all speed to tell his mother of the little old man who had faded from his sight like a wreath of smoke.

"Now I wonder what it is you have seen," said the good woman, raising her hands in surprise. "Was he brown, my son, with a long nose?"

"As brown as a nut, mother, with no end of nose."

"Just as I supposed, my child! That dwarf is a wonderful creature, — one of the night-elves, a race gifted with great understanding. Know, my son, that he carves runes upon stones; and he no doubt assisted in making Thor's hammer, that terrible instrument which can crush the skull of a giant."

"One thing I observed," said the boy: "he blinked at that flashing in the sky, which people call Northern Lights; he had to shade his eyes with his funny little hand."

"Did he, indeed? Poor Elf! Light is painful to his race; and I have even heard that

a stroke of sunshine is able to turn them into stones. I am almost afraid of this little tree," added the good mother musingly. "You know what we read in the holy Eddas: Both the alder and the ash trees should be held sacred; for Odin formed man from the ash, and woman from the alder. Nevertheless, the night-elf could not have meant to do you a mischief. Let us plant the tree as he directed."

"What, in the frozen ground, under the snow?"

But it now, for the first time, appeared that there was a spot of earth near the south window, which must have been waiting for the tree, since it was as soft and warm as if the sun had been shining on it all the year. Here they planted the alder; and Thule brought water, and moistened the roots.

Next morning the tree seemed to have

grown a foot higher; and by daylight its leaves showed a silver lining.

"May Odin favor my pretty alder!" said Thule; "nor let the frost pinch it, nor the winds blacken its green buds!"

Thule went into the woods again; and, as he was whistling at his work, he happened to look down, and there, on the ground, at his feet, lay a purse, well lined with gold. He counted the pieces: fifty, all bright and new.

"I will go to the town," thought the boy, shaking his head and sighing (for the gold was very tempting), "I will go to the town, and ask who has lost a purse with fifty pieces of precious gold. Ah, me! I wish I could keep it!" then we should swim in herrings and oil; and who knows but, for once in my life, I might even get a taste of venison?"

But next moment he loosened his greedy clutch at the purse. "No matter how brave

ly it shines! it is not *my* gold; and it is too heavy for me to carry. Stolen money is worse than a mill-stone about one's neck, so my mother says."

"Keep the purse, little boy," said a sweet voice close by his elbow. He turned, and saw a beautiful child, as radiant as a sunbeam, and clad in garments of delicate and transparent texture.

"I will be your friend, little boy. That purse was dropped by a lady who wears a fur cloak and long veil. If she asks for her treasure, I can say it fell into a hole in the ground. Everybody believes me: never fear!"

"Poor misguided angel!" said the boy, amazed by her wondrous beauty no less than by her apparent want of truth. "You are, indeed, a lovely little tempter; but I have a dear mother at home, and I love her better

than a million pieces of gold. I must go to the town, and seek out this lady you mention, who wears a fur cloak and long veil."

"Nay, if you will be so stupid," said the shining child, "why, I will even go with you, and show you the way."

So, gliding gracefully before the bewildered youth, she led him out of the forest, into the most crowded part of the city, up to the door of a splendid mansion; but, when Thule turned his head only an instant, she was gone, and no trace of her was to be seen: she seemed to have melted into sunshine.

The lady of the house received the purse with thanks, and would gladly have given Thule a piece of the gold; but, much as the boy longed for it, he put it aside, saying, "No, madam: my mother assures me I must be honest without the hope of reward. She

would not like me to take wages for not being a thief!"

The next morning the alder-tree had grown another foot; and Thule and his mother watched the growing leaves, and touched them with reverent fingers. They were certainly of a tender green, lined with shining silver.

"May Odin favor my pretty alder!" said Thule; "nor let the frost pinch it, nor the winds blacken its green buds!"

Then Thule kissed his mother, and trudged off to the forest as usual. But he seemed doomed to adventures; for this time he was met by three armed men, who were roaming the country as if seeking something.

"Prithee, little urchin," said one of the men, "can you tell us what has become of a young alder-tree, whose green leaves are lined with silver?"

"I dug up an alder-bush, kind sirs," replied the boy, trembling, and remembering that his mother had said she was almost afraid of that little tree.

"There are many alder-bushes," said another of the men gruffly; "but only one is green at this time of year, and has silver-lined leaves. It was placed here by command of the giant Loki, and no one was to touch it under pain of death; for, when his mountain-garden should be laid out in the spring, the tree was to be uprooted, and planted therein."

Thule grew almost as stiff and white as if a frost-giant had suddenly breathed on him. He knew that Loki was a pitiless god, feared by all, and beloved by none, — a god who had an especial grudge against the whole human race.

"I will hold my peace," thought Thule.

"I will never confess that the tree I carried away has silver-lined leaves. I will hasten home, pluck up the bush, and burn it: then who will be the wiser?"

But Thule, in spite of his trembling, could not forget his good mother's counsel: —

"Your words, my boy, let them be truth, and nothing but truth, though a sword should be swinging over your head."

Then, as soon as his voice returned to him, he confessed that the tree he had removed was really just such an one as the men described, and begged for mercy, because, as he said, he had committed the sin ignorantly, not knowing the mandate of the terrible giant.

But the men bade Thule lead them to his mother's house, and point out his stolen treasure; declaring that they could show no mercy; for, when Loki had made a decree, no man should alter it by one jot or one tittle.

"Oh!" thought the unfortunate boy, wringing his hands, and trembling till the woollen tassel on his cap danced a gallopade, "oh, if the cruel night-elf, who led me into this mischief, would only come forward now, and help me out of it! But, alas, it is of no avail to invoke him; for it is now broad daylight, and the sun would strike him into a stone image in a twinkling."

When Thule, followed by the messengers of Loki, had reached the door of his cottage, he found his gray-haired mother sprinkling the roots of the beautiful alder, and fondling its leaves with innocent pleasure. At sight of the armed men, she started back in affright.

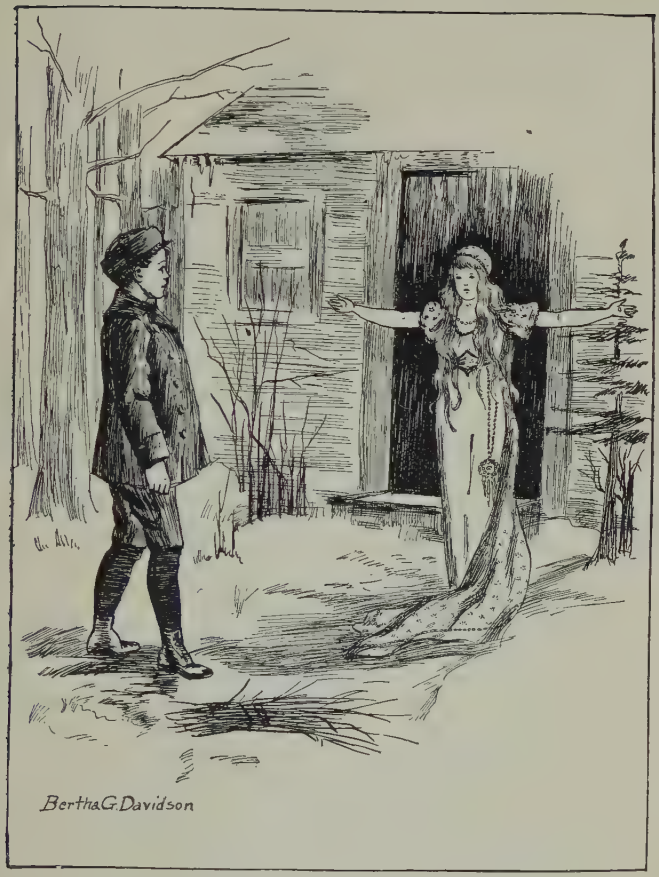
"It is indeed the giant's tree," said the men to Thule. "Pluck it up, and follow us with it to Loki's castle on the mountain."

"To Loki's castle!" shrieked the wretched

mother. "Then he must pass a frightful wilderness, be assailed by the frost-giants; and, if there be any breath left in him, Loki will dash it out at a glance! Have mercy on a poor old mother, O good soldiers!"

The unhappy boy touched the tree, and it came out of the ground of its own free will; and, in a trice, stood on its feet, shook out its branches into arms, and in another moment was no longer a tree, but a child, with a beauty as dazzling as sunshine.

"Unfortunate men!" said she, in a voice whose angriest tones were sweeter than the music of an Æolian harp, "unfortunate are you in being the servants of Loki! Go, tell your cruel master that the schemes he has plotted against me and mine have all failed: my enchantment is over forever. Yonder boy," said she, pointing to little Thule, "has saved me. I was, and still remain, an elf of



THE ELF OF LIGHT.

Page 132.

light, as playful and harmless as sunshine. The merciless Loki, enraged at the love I bear the children of men, changed me to a little alder-tree, which is the emblem of girlhood. But he had no power to keep me in that form forever. He was obliged to make a condition, and he made the hardest one that his artful mind could invent: 'Since you love mortals so dearly,' said he, 'no one but a mortal shall free you from your imprisonment. You shall remain a tree till a good child shall touch you,—a child who is generous enough to SHARE HIS LAST LOAF WITH A STRANGER, honest enough to GIVE BACK A REWARD FOR HIS HONESTY, brave enough to SPEAK THE TRUTH WHEN A LIE WOULD HAVE SAVED HIS LIFE. Long shall you wait for such a deliverer!'

"Now how amazed will Loki be when he learns that this little boy has been

tempted in all these particulars, yet proves true. My poor soldiers, you may return whence you came, for the alder-tree will never rustle its silver leaves in the mountain-garden of Loki."

Then the men disappeared, not sorry that the good boy had escaped his threatened doom.

Thule, looking at the beautiful elf so lately a tree, could hardly trust his own eyes; and I fancy that many a boy, even at the present day, would have felt rather bewildered under the circumstances.

"Shining child!" said he: "you look vastly like the wonderful little being who led me out of the forest yesterday."

"That may well be," replied the elf of light; "for she is my sister. The brown dwarf who pointed out to you the alder-tree

is also an excellent friend of mine, though strange to say, I have never seen him. We love to aid each other in all possible ways; yet we can never meet, for there is a fatality in my eyes which would strike him dead. He had heard of Thule, the little woodcutter who was called so brave and generous and true. He tried you, you see; and so did my frolicsome sister, who was fairly ablaze with delight when she found you could not be tempted to steal!"

Thule's mother had stood all the while on the threshold, overawed and dumb. Now she came forward, and said, —

"I am prouder to-day than I should be if my son had slain ten men on the battle-field!"

The beautiful elf of light, penetrated with gratitude and admiration, remained Thule's

fast friend as long as he lived. She gave the lad and his mother an excellent home, and made them happy all the days of their lives.

THE PRINCESS HILDA.

Princess Hildegarde sat at an open window, looking out upon her garden of flowers. She was very beautiful, with a face as fair and sweet as a rose. Not far off sat, watching her, her young cousin Zora, with a frown on her brow.

There was bitter hatred in Zora's heart because Hildegarde was rich and she was poor; because Hildegarde would, in time, be a queen, and she one of her subjects. Moreover, Hildegarde was so beautiful and good that the fame of her loveliness had spread far and wide; and it was for her beauty that Zora hated her more than for any thing else.

In childhood Zora had been very fair; and the courtiers had petted her, and pronounced her even fairer than the princess; but her beauty had never meant any thing but bright eyes and cherry cheeks: so it could not last. If she had only cherished pure thoughts and kind wishes, she might still have been as lovely as Hilda; but who does not know that evil feelings write themselves on the face?

Jealousy had pulled her mouth down at the corners; deceit had given it a foolish smirk; spite had plowed an ugly frown in her brow; while she had tried so many arts to make her rich brown skin as delicately white as Hilda's, that it was changed to the tint of chrome yellow.

It was said in those days, that Zora was in the power of wicked fairies, who twisted her features into the shape that pleased them best.

At any rate, how the amiable Princess Hilda was to blame for all these deformities it would be hard to say; and she little dreamed of the malice in her cousin's heart.

But, while Hilda was looking out of the window, a noble knight passed that way; and so delighted was he with the rare sweetness of her face, that he forgot himself, and paused a moment to gaze at her. The princess blushed, and let fall the silken curtain; but Zora had seen the knight, and knew he was the royal Prince Reginald. She ground her teeth in rage; for she had determined that the prince should never see her beautiful cousin.

"They shall not meet," said she to herself: "no, not if there are bad fairies enough to prevent it."

But, when the princess looked up, Zora was smiling very sweetly. Who could have

dreamed that she was thinking of nothing but how to ruin the peace of her gentle cousin?

Zora could hardly wait for nightfall, so eager was she to do her wicked work. When it was dark, and all was quiet, she stole out of the castle, wearing a black mantle which hid her face.

"Now," thought she, "no one can recognize me, and I will seek the fairy Gerula."

You must know that Gerula was one of the most wicked and hideous sprites that ever existed. She dwelt in a cave far from the abodes of men. It was hidden by huge trees through which the wind never ceased howling. At evening owls hooted overhead, and many creeping things wound their length along the ground. The more toads and snakes she could see about her, the better was she pleased; for fairies, as well as

mortals, are attracted by what is akin to themselves.

She was descended from a race called kobolds or goblins; and she loved all the metals which lie under the earth as well as the living things which crawl up out of its bosom.

So acute were her ears, that she heard Zora's steps from a great distance. She brushed back her elf-locks, and gave a low grunt like some wild beast. It pleased her that the Lady Zora should find need of her counsel; but, when Zora had reached the cave, the cunning fairy pretended to be sleeping, and started up in seeming surprise.

"What brings a body here at this time of night?" said she.

"I am Lady Zora. I have come, sweet fairy, to beg a favor. The Princess Hilda is hateful to me: work one of your charms on her, and let me see her face no more."

The old fairy pricked up her ears and said to herself, "Ha! ha! I will have nice sport out o' this!" then said aloud, "Say, what harm has the princess done to my rosebud, my lily, my pride?"

Zora's eyes flashed. "Prince Reginald has seen her; and to see her is to love her. My heart is set on wedding Prince Reginald. Take her out of his way!"

Just then a broad gleam of moonlight fell on the treacherous maiden. It was strange how much she looked like the cruel fairy; and Gerula gazed on her with delight.

"My beautiful viper!" said she, using the sweetest pet-name she could think of, "I will do your bidding. But first say what you will give me if I put Hildegarde out of your way."

Then she chuckled, and rubbed her hands in great glee. Zora started back in alarm.

"I did not know you sold your charms for gold; but I would give you half my fortune if need be, any thing, to be rid of Hilda."

The fairy chuckled again. "Just the damsel for me," thought she.

"I will give you a diamond necklace," said Zora: "it is worth a small kingdom, and was given me by my cousin Hilda. You can surely ask no more?"

"Diamonds!" said the goblin, snapping her fingers. "What think you I care for them? Do I not tire of stooping to pick them up? for they are given me by my cousins, the gnomes, any day. No diamonds for me! Keep them and your gold. I ask but one thing, my dear."

Here she spoke in low hissing tones, more terrible than her loudest croakings.

"Promise me, if you do not marry Prince

Reginald, you will let me change you into a charming green snake."

"Alas!" cried Zora, turning pale, "who ever heard of such a cruel request?"

"Cruel, am I?" said the goblin in delight. "Oh, I must seem cruel to one who is so gentle and lovely as Hilda!"

"Alas," cried Zora, "I may fail to win Prince Reginald."

"All the better," chuckled the fairy. "When you become a snake, you and I shall enjoy each other's society, I assure you."

Zora shuddered.

"But it's all one to me," added the goblin, beginning to yawn. "On the whole, I think you may as well go home."

Zora wrung her hands, and groaned.

"Yes," said the gnome: "go back to the castle. Ugh! I would sooner trust one of my winking owls to do a daring deed than

you! Fie upon you! Creep back to your bed, and let Hilda marry the prince: a lovely pair they will make. Off with you, for I have to make up my sleep I have lost."

But Zora was thinking.

"I am silly indeed!" she said to herself. "Why do I fear that I shall not win the love of Prince Reginald? Only Hilda stands in my way." Then she said aloud, —

"Lovely being! sweetest of all the race! Great as is my horror, I will consent to your will."

Just then was heard a crackling in the dry leaves.

"Only a snake," said the goblin. Zora trembled.

"Will you promise me that Hilda will never trouble me again?"

"I promise," said the goblin, with one of

her merriest laughs, as loud and hoarse as the song of a frog.

Just then a sigh was heard not far from the place where Zora stood. "There is some one here: we are watched," she whispered. But Gerula thought it the howling of the wind; for she was busily musing over the charm she was about to obtain of her cousins, the gnomes, and her eyes and ears were not as sharp as usual.

She took from the ground her crooked staff.

"Hush," said she; "if the sky were to fall on your head, you are not to speak; for now begins the charm."

Then she drew a circle three times on the ground, with her staff, and said in low tones, —

"Hither, ye cousins, that come at my call:
The princess is young and fair;
Mix me a charm that shall bring her to woe
Spin me your vilest snare."

A mist arose, in which Zora could see dim figures, one after another. Zora held her breath. Gerula muttered again in low tones, —

"Hilda is gentle, and dreams of no guile;
The little gnomes sit and weep;
'Make her, — if *must* be, — a snowy wee lamb,
In the fold with her father's sheep.'"

Zora clapped her hands in delight. But just then, a faint sound was heard, as of some one talking between the teeth. Then Zora spoke, and the charm was broken. She did not intend to speak; but asked, "What noise was that?" before she thought.

"You have broken the charm," said the fairy. "The soft-hearted gnomes are unwilling to punish Hilda; but I hoped, by my craft, I could force them to keep her a lamb forever; or, at most, to let her grow to a sheep, and die by the knife.

"I will now weave a new charm; but I fear me they will repent; and Hilda will not be got out of the way, after all. Not a word more, I warn you."

So saying, the goblin made another circle three times, on the ground, and again muttered,—

"How long is fair Hilda a snowy wee lamb?
The little gnomes cry, 'We fear
Till comes a brave lion so tender and true,
She lives by his side a year.'"

Zora clapped her hands again. "That is well," said she, "for never was a lion seen who could let a little helpless lamb pass his way without tearing it in pieces."

"True," said the gnome, well pleased, "it has worked well. Hilda will never trouble you again: so creep home softly, and go to your rest: dream of bats and creeping

snakes; and to-morrow, at sunrise, ask your cousin to walk with you in the park. Now adieu!"

"Adieu, sweetest and best of fairies!" said Zora, drawing her silken mantle closely about her face. As she left the hideous cave, snakes hissed after her, and a bat flew in her face; but she had sold herself to evil, and walked on without fear of the creatures she so strongly resembled.

Next morning, at the first peep of the sun, she cried, "Awake, dearest Hilda, joy of my life, and walk with me in the park. I have lost my diamond necklace; and last night I dreamed it was lying in the grass."

So Princess Hildegarde opened her eyes, and hastened to follow her cousin; for her heart was quickly moved to any act of kindness.

"What a fine flock of sheep!" cried Hilda.

as they were walking in the park. "Such innocent" ——

She would have said more, but the words on her tongue were suddenly changed to tender bleatings; and even as Zora stood looking at her, she crouched down on all fours, dwindled in size, was enveloped in white fleece, and became a dumb lamb.

Overwhelmed with horror and surprise, she raised her pleading, tearful eyes to the face of her cousin. But Zora gave a mocking laugh, and said, pointing her finger at her,—

"Who now is the heir of the throne? Will they set the royal crown on a sheep's head, think you? Bravo, sweet creature! You may stand now between me and Prince Reginald as much as you please. It's all my work. I tell you once for all, I hate you, Hildegarde."

Was this Zora's return for her cousin's love? The princess would fain have expressed her grief and amazement.

"Pray don't try to talk, my bonny wee thing! It is not one of your gifts, at present. Your voice has ceased to be musical. I can sing now as well as you. Go to nibbling grass, deary, and a long life to you!"

Then the treacherous Zora turned on her heel, and left her poor cousin to her mute despair.

A search was made far and wide for the missing princess. Forests were hunted, rivers were dragged; but without avail. Deep gloom fell on the people, and the queen nearly died of sorrow. They all believed Hilda dead, all but Zora, who knew too well her cruel fate.

Then Zora was treated like the king's daughter. Wherever she went, there were ser-

vants to follow her; yet none loved her, and behind her back they made wry faces, and said she looked like one who was tormented by evil fairies.

But, alas for Zora, nothing more was seen of Prince Reginald. She watched the windows day after day, hoping to see him ride by on his coal-black steed; but he never came. Then she grew crosser than ever, and the frown on her brow ploughed deeper still. She dreamed every night of horrible goblins and slender green snakes.

All the while, poor Hildegarde roamed about the park. The other lambs were content to nip the sweet grass, and frisk in the sun; but the princess remembered something better, for her soul did not sleep.

The king himself, in his walks, was struck with the beauty of the lamb; its fleece was far softer, finer, and whiter than was common.

He said to his chief shepherd, "Watch well yonder snow-white lamb, and give it particular care."

For there was something in its soft dark eyes, as they were raised to his face, which stirred the king's heart, though he knew not why.

One day the city was thrown into a great tumult. A lion had been seen in the thicket which bordered the park. The huntsmen, hearing of it, stole out privately to waylay him in a snare. He was caught alive by the king's favorite huntsman. It was agreed that such a fine lion had never been seen before; and the king ordered a strong iron cage for the beast, and made his favorite huntsman his keeper.

Now the cage was in the midst of the park; and such was the terror of the sheep and deer, that none of them went near it.

"I will go," thought poor Hildegarde; "let the lion tear me in pieces. Sooner would I perish, than live on, a poor wee lamb all my days."

So she went up to the cage, though with a faint heart; but the lion put his paw out of the bars, and stroked her face, as if he would bid her welcome. The keeper reported the fact with great surprise.

It may be that the beautiful brown eyes of the lamb tamed the fierce spirit of the lion; for they were human eyes, full of Hildegarde's own soul. Be that as it may, the lamb went every day to the cage, till the lion learned to watch for her, and gave a low growl of joy when he saw her coming. At last the keeper ventured to drop her carefully into the cage. The lion was beside himself with joy; and, after that, the lamb was placed in the cage every morning, and only taken out at night.

Then the king invited all the noblemen into his park, to see the strange sight of a lion and a lamb living together in peace. And all the while Hildegarde loved her shaggy companion, and asked herself every day how it could be that a lion should have such speaking eyes and such a tender heart. But she almost believed that he was a human being, shut up, like herself, in a cruel disguise.

At last, when a whole year had gone by, the time came for Hilda to be disenchanted; for the good little gnomes had declared that if she could live for a twelvemonth in peace with a lion, the charm would then be at an end.

Hilda did not know this; but awoke at sunrise, and, going to drink, saw the image of her old self in the fountain; and faint voices repeated in chorus these lines: —

"Thrice welcome, sweet Hilda! the little gnomes say
At sunrise their charms shall end;
So go to the lion, and open the cage;
The prince is your own true friend."

This was so sudden and unexpected that the happy Hilda could hardly believe her senses. She gazed at her jewelled fingers; she touched her velvet robe. "It is Hildegarde," said she dreamily; "where has she stayed so long?"

She went to the cage; and, finding the key hanging on the outside, would fain have freed the poor lion, but thought of the terror it would cause the sheep and deer, and dared not do it.

She put her soft white arms within the bars, saying, —

"You have been a true friend to the little white lamb. She has found her tongue again, and can say so. Kind old lion, gentle prisoner, Hildegarde will not forget you."

The noble beast looked at the disenchanted princess, and the next instant was changed to his true form; and, in place of a tawny lion, it was the brave Prince Reginald. Hilda blushed with joyful surprise, and would have taken down the key to unlock the cage, but the prince said, —

"Loveliest Hildegarde, will you be my bride? Speak before you unlock the cage; for, if you say nay, Reginald must again become a dumb beast, and, as he has been for a year, so will he be for the rest of his days."

Hildegarde cast down her eyes, and answered, "If so be the lion and the lamb could live side by side for a year, may not Reginald and Hilda dwell together in peace?"

"Then," said the joyful Prince Reginald, "I pray thee unlock the cage."

Now, as they walked together in the park

the prince told Hildegarde, that he had loved her for a twelvemonth and a day.

He described Hilda's visit to the cruel goblin. He said that he himself had overheard the two talking together, had ground his teeth, and sighed. Then the gnomes, seeing his grief, had come asking him if he would be changed for a year, and maybe for life, into a lion; and for Hildegarde's sake he had gladly consented.

Hearing all these things, the grateful princess wept, and said, —

"Now I know that Prince Reginald is my own true friend."

The prince led Hilda to the palace, and presented her to the king and queen. Great was the wonder, and loud the rejoicing throughout the land.

The treacherous Zora was seen no more, but was changed into a slender green snake

and the king said she deserved her fate; "for, mark you," cried he, "there is no crime worse than to play false to those whom we pretend to love."

But Prince Reginald and Hildegarde were married, and lived in peace all the rest of their lives.

GOLDILOCKS.

"A king lived long ago,
In the morning of the world,"

who had two children, Despard and Goldilocks. They were twin brother and sister, but no more alike than a queen-lily and a nightshade, a raven and a dove.

Goldilocks was a bright young damsel, with hair like fine threads of gold, and a face so radiant that people questioned if the blood in her veins might not be liquid sunshine. Her eyes were as soft as violets; and her laugh was like the music of a spring robin.

Despard, on the other hand, was as melancholy as an owl. His raven hair cast gloomy

shadows, and his mournful eyes pierced you with a sudden sorrow. He was too low-spirited to chase butterflies, weave daisy-chains, and dance with Goldilocks among the flowers. He liked better to play at a mimic funeral, and deck himself as chief mourner, in a friar's robe with sable plumes. He could never understand why laughing Goldilocks should object to making believe die, and be buried in the large jewel-coffer, which stood for a tomb.

He always said that, if he lived to be a man, he should grow all the more wretched, and creep over the earth like a great black cloud. When Despard spoke so hopelessly, Goldilocks paused in her song or her play, and stealthily brushed a rare tear from her eye. She was afraid her brother's words might prove true.

These children lived in what is called the

Golden Age, when the rivers flowed with milk and wine, and yellow honey dripped from oak-trees. Their childhood would probably have lasted forever; but the Silver Age came on, and every thing was changed. Then, it was sometimes too warm, and sometimes too cold. People began to live in caves, and weave houses of twigs. The king, their father, died, and went, so it was said, to the "Isles of the Blessed."

The children were shipwrecked upon a foreign shore, all because of a sudden swell of the ocean. Here they were desolate and homesick. The strange people among whom they had fallen did not know they were the children of a king. No one was left to care for them but their old nurse, named Sibyl.

This aged woman was growing lame, and her hair was gray; yet she loved the twins, and would spin all the day long, to buy black

bread for them, and now and then a little choice fruit.

"Alas," she sighed, "alas, for the Golden Age, when the forests had never been robbed, when oxen were not called to draw the plough, and the beautiful earth laughed, and tossed up fruit and flowers without waiting to be asked!"

The frocks that Sibyl made for Goldilocks were coarse; but on fair spring days she took from the chest a delicate, rosy robe, embroidered with gold, and smiled to see how it adorned the child.

But as for Despard, she had no hope that he would ever look well in any thing. She would part Goldilocks' wonderful hair, and say,—

"Old Sibyl knows who is her love; she knows who would be glad to give her pomegranates and grapes, when she is too old to spin, and too weak to sit up."

Little Goldilocks would laughingly reply,—

"And I know, too: when I am a woman I shall weave a net of my hair, and fish up all the gold that has sunk to the beds of the rivers. Then I know who will have a set of hard gold teeth, and a silver rocking-chair."

"Thou art lovely enough to be a goddess, little Goldilocks. And what wilt thou do with the rest of the gold?"

"Oh, Despard shall have all he can carry; for Despard is good, let people say what they may. And I will have a crown made for him, with diamonds set in it as plenty as plums in a pudding."

"Listen, my children," said the old Sibyl, sadly: "there will be no one to give me grapes and pomegranates when I am faint and weak. I can read by the stars that you are soon to go on a pilgrimage, and leave

your old nurse behind. You may well weep, my good little boy: there is to be no rest for your feet till you have travelled over the whole world, from north to south."

Despard groaned aloud; but Goldilocks clapped her hands and laughed. "Oh, let us start to-night," she cried.

"When the sun-god has made twelve journeys in his winged boat," sighed Sibyl, "and when the young moon has arisen out of the ocean, then you may go."

And, at the appointed time, the faithful nurse, with many tears, prepared her foster-children for their long journey. She took from a worm-eaten coffer some family heirlooms, which had been lying since the days of the Golden Age, enveloped in rose-leaves and gold paper.

She placed in the hand of Despard a dagger with a jewelled hilt, a quiver of poisoned

arrows, and a glittering sword, with a blade sharper than a serpent's tooth.

But to Goldilocks she gave a flask of smooth, fragrant oil, a vase of crystal-bright water, and a fan made of the feathers of the beautiful bird of Paradise.

Kissing the little pilgrims, she said, —

"These gifts have been saved for you these many years: use them as an inward voice shall whisper you: I give you my blessing. The gods attend you! Farewell."

The children at first walked on sorrowfully; but soon the gay spirits of Goldilocks rebounded, and she waltzed hither and thither, like a morsel of thistle-down.

"See, brother," said she, "we almost fly! What a glorious thing it is to go on a pilgrimage! I am glad the beautiful Silver Age has come, and Jupiter has given us leave to take a peep at the world!"

"All very well for you to say," moaned Despard; "you flit about as if you had wings on your feet; while, as for me, it is true I move with equal speed, but so painfully that I wonder my footprints are not stained with blood."

Soon the children observed, not far off, a party of youths rowing on the bosom of a lake. They sat in a rocking, unsteady little bark, but were in gay spirits, blowing bubbles, watching idle clouds, and throwing up empty shouts to be caught up and echoed by the hills.

"I wish we had not seen these happy people," sighed Despard; "for, if you can believe me, sister, I really feel as if I must pelt them with my arrows."

So saying, little Despard began to fire his poisonous darts at random.

"Why, brother," cried Goldilocks, in alarm

"are you possessed by the furies? Take care how you aim, or you will surely do mischief."

Even as she spoke, several of the gay youths dropped to the bottom of the boat, apparently wounded. Their companions pushed for the shore; and Goldilocks almost flew, to pour into the red wounds her brother had made the smooth healing oil from her flask.

"Poor dears," said she, pitying their pain, "I have done my best; and, see! these ugly gashes are almost healed. I cannot promise you, though, that they will not leave scars."

The youths thanked the sweet girl, and assured her it was almost a pleasure to be wounded, if one might be nursed by such gentle hands as hers. But as for Despard, it was hardly strange that they should look upon the poor boy as a wicked little highwayman; or, at best, a saucy, careless fellow.

Some of the older youths, however, patted him on the shoulder, and said, "For your sweet sister's sake we can even endure your pranks."

"Do not despise me," said the boy, sadly; "for as I am moved, so must I do. Not for the whole world would I fire a poisonous arrow, if the mighty Jove did not compel me."

As they walked on, Despard, against his will, flung into the air a quantity of winged torments, which he found stowed away in his wallet, such as gnats, wasps, and flies.

"There, now," said sweet Goldilocks, ready to weep, "why could you not look before you, and see those pretty children playing yonder in that fragrant meadow?"

"I saw them," said Despard; "but what good did that do?"

"O brother, I wish the Golden Age would

come again, and then you would cease scattering mischief and trouble."

The little ones, suddenly stopped in their play by the army of insects, ran hither and thither over the meadow, screaming with pain. But Goldilocks appeared in the midst of them, with her shining hair, violet eyes, and laugh like the music of a spring robin.

"Come to me," said she; "let me kiss away the stings."

In a very short space the children were soothed, and had forgotten their trouble. Then they threw their little arms about Goldilocks' neck, and begged her to stay and play with them.

"Sweet children, it is my mission, — so the stars say, — to travel all over this world, from north to south. But, for all that, I will frolic with you till the sun sets."

"Will the sad boy come too?" asked the children.

Goldilocks shook her bright curls. "He is planting a garden," said she; "no need to ask him; he hears nothing while he is at play, and his games are as solemn as midnight."

The children made believe that the beautiful Goldilocks, in her rose-colored dress, with her beaming hair and flying feet, was a great butterfly, which they were trying to catch. Now here, now there, the glowing butterfly flitted from flower to flower, leading her followers a merry chase. Every child thought to seize and hold her, for a kiss. She laughed; and the breezes danced with her hair, like —

> "Zephyr with Aurora playing,
> As he met her once a-Maying."

But before any one had kissed or even touched her, she had disappeared, leaving

the children gazing into the air, and seeking their late companion with tearful eyes.

Goldilocks had only gone back to Despard, who was still planting flower-seeds.

"What a miserable game," said Goldilocks; "it is worse than playing funeral! Who thought you could make flowers grow? Our old nurse said it was only Demeter, the goddess, who could do that. Here, now, you have called up a bristling crop of thistles and brambles! On my word, Despard, it is a pity!"

"Well, well, Goldilocks, see what you can make of them. I am doomed to work, though I don't wish it; and my work is always disagreeable, though I can't tell why!"

Goldilocks knelt, and blew on the prickly plants with her sweet breath. By the nodding of the next breeze, they were changed to roses, violets, and hare-bells.

"It is pleasant to see any thing smile, even a flower," said Goldilocks, laughing as she spoke.

"I think," replied Despard, "that this is a strange pilgrimage. I believe our very thoughts are alive. I wish I could stop thinking."

By and by they came to a rude house, — as fine a one, though, as people in the Silver Age had yet learned how to build. Despard paused, and knocked gently. "Why linger here?" whispered his sister.

"I know not," sighed the boy, "but so must I do."

"How now, little ones? you startled me so!" cried a woman, opening the door by the width of a crack.

"Let us come in," said Despard, sorrowfully; "we are two little wanderers; and our hairs are wet with night-dews."

"Come in, then, little ones, and welcome; but never, at any one's door, knock so loud again," added the woman, pressing her hand against her heart.

"I only tapped with the ends of my fingers," said the boy.

"Ah," said the woman, "it was louder to me than thunder." Then, after she had set before them a supper of bread and milk, she rocked her baby, and sang to it a sweet cradle-song about mother Juno and high Olympus.

The children lay down on beds of rushes; and Goldilocks, soothed by the lullaby, fell asleep; but soon awoke, and saw her brother leaning, on tiptoe, over the osier basket. The baby's face looked, in the moonlight, white and pinched; and its sick hands were pressed together like two withered rose-leaves.

"Let me kiss him," whispered Goldilocks

smiling. But bitter tears rolled down Despard's cheeks. Drawing his little sword from its sheath, he pricked the baby's heart till one red drop, the life-drop, stained the steel. The sick baby ceased to breathe.

"O Despard, what have you done?" cried Goldilocks, seizing his arm.

"I know not," said the boy; "but as my heart moves me, so must I do."

Hearing voices, the mother awoke, and, as her habit was, turned at once to the cradle. The baby lay there beautiful and still; the pinched look gone, and its furrowed brow smoothed into a baby's smile. The mother wept bitterly.

"Ah, little stranger," said she, turning to Despard, "I knew you when I let you in. Why did I open the door for you?"

"Poor mother," said the boy sorrowfully, "if you had not opened the door, I must have come in by the window."

But Goldilocks threw her soft arms about the woman's neck, and comforted her till it was morning, and the "gilded car of day" had risen from the ocean. The tears on her cheeks she dried with her fan, made of magical feathers.

When the children set out again on their journey, the woman gave Goldilocks a loving kiss, and then embraced Despard, saying,—

"For the sake of your sweet sister, I love even you."

"Poor little brother," said Goldilocks when they had gone farther on their journey, "you are as good as I; but how is it? you make people weep, while I must go with you to dry the tears you call forth."

"I am a black cloud," groaned Despard, "you a sunbeam."

"But I like to have a cloud to shine on," said loving little Goldilocks.

Footsore and weary, the little pilgrims travelled on; and, when they had gone from north to south, and back again, the Sibyl met them with tender kisses; and, when they were refreshed, bade them go forth again.

"For," said she, "this world is always new, my dears. The people who are born to-day were not here yesterday; and every mortal must see the faces of my foster-children."

It was now the Brazen Age, and Despard and Goldilocks had grown to be a youth and maiden; but still they travelled on. The Iron Age came; and Despard's raven hair was frosted; but Goldilocks' curls never faded. Let her live as long as live she may, she can never grow old.

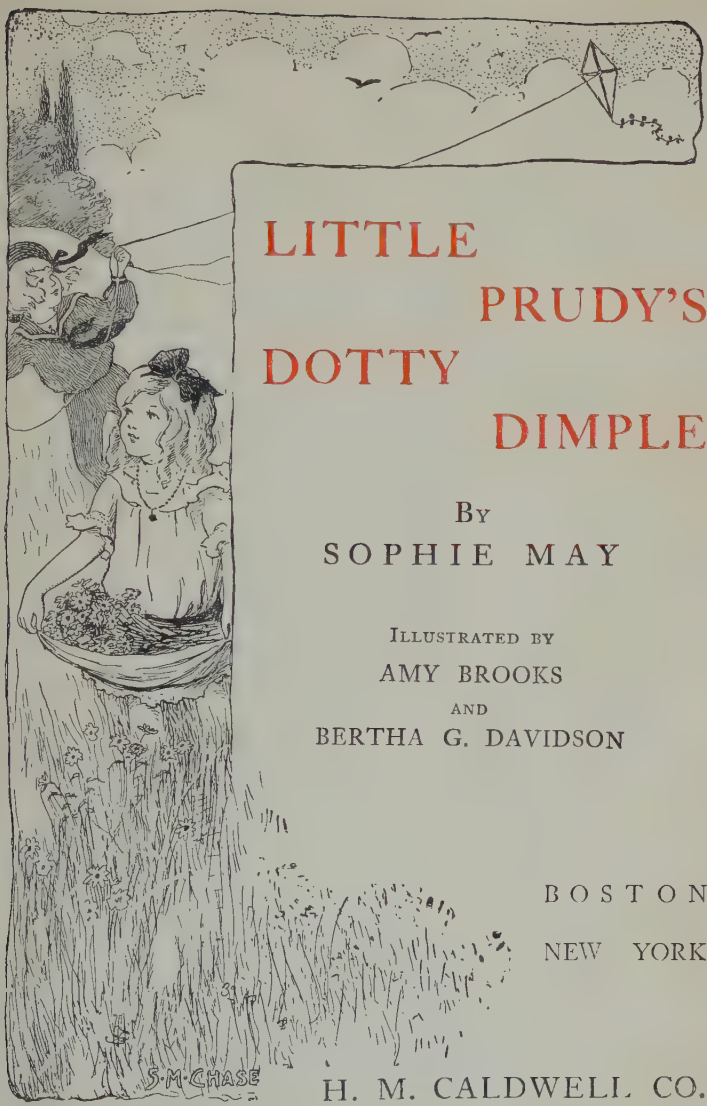
Their pilgrimage is not over yet; nor will it be while the earth revolves about the sun.

The brother and sister come to every house; they knock at every door.

To all the children who open their eyes upon the light, come Despard and Goldilocks, the bitter and the sweet of life, the twin angels of Happiness and Sorrow.

THE END.

SUSY IN SEARCH OF ALICE. Page 22.



LITTLE PRUDY'S DOTTY DIMPLE

By
SOPHIE MAY

Illustrated by
AMY BROOKS
and
BERTHA G. DAVIDSON

BOSTON
NEW YORK
H. M. CALDWELL CO.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1865, by
Lee & Shepard
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts

Copyright, 1893, by Rebecca S. Clarke

All Rights Reserved

Little Prudy's Dotty Dimple

DEDICATION.

TO LITTLE NELLY CLARKE.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	DOTTY'S BABYHOOD,	7
II.	THE BONE MAN,	19
III.	DOTTY'S VERSES,	32
IV.	THE NESTLINGS,	46
V.	FANNY HARLOW'S PARTY,	57
VI.	THE LITTLE TEACHER,	73
VII.	BOTH SIDES OF A STORY,	87
VIII.	THE WATER-KELPIE,	103
IX.	BROTHER ZIP,	120
X.	DR. PRUDY,	135
XI.	BUYING A BROTHER,	152
XII.	A WEDDING,	164

DOTTY DIMPLE.

CHAPTER I.

DOTTY'S BABYHOOD.

ALICE was the youngest of the Parlin family. When Grandma Read called the children into the kitchen, and told them about their new little sister, Susy danced for joy; and Prudy, in her delight, opened the cellar door, and fell down the whole length of the stairs. However, she rolled as softly as a pincushion, and was not seriously hurt.

"But you can't go into mother's room," said Susy, "you're crying so hard."

"Poh!" replied three-years-old Prudy,

twinkling off the tears; "yes, I can neither. I won't go *crying* in! I didn't hurt me velly bad. I'm weller now!"

So she had the first peep at the wee dot of a baby in the nurse's arms.

"O, dear, dear," said she, "what shall I do? I *are* so glad! I wish I could jump clear up to the *sky* of this room! How you do, little sister?"

The baby made no reply.

"Why! don't you love me? This is *me:* my name's Prudy. I've got a red pocket-dress; — Santa Claw bringed it."

Still the little stranger paid no heed, — only winked her small, bright eyes, and at last closed them entirely.

"O, my stars! she don't hear the leastest thing," sobbed Prudy, glad of an excuse to cry again. "She can't hear the leastest mite of a thing! Where's the holes in her ears gone to? O, dear, dear!"

It seemed to Susy that this was the happiest day of her life. She stole up to her mother and kissed her. "O, mamma," said she, "wasn't God good to send this little sister? — Why, I'm crying," added Susy, greatly surprised; "what do you suppose makes me cry, when I'm happy all over — clear to the ends of my fingers?"

"Yes, your eyes are a sprinklin' down tears, but you're laughing all over your face; and so 'm I," said little Prudy, delighted to see some one else as foolish as herself.

"Susan, I hope thee 'll receive this new sister as a gift from God," said grandma Read, wiping her spectacles.

"It seems so funny," said Susy, gently stroking the baby's face; "so funny for me to have a new sister."

"Now you've telled a story, Susy Parlin;

she was sended to me, — isn't I the littlest?" cried bruised and battered Prudy, shaking with another tempest of tears, and kissing the baby violently.

"O, mamma! O, grandma," said Susy, clasping her hands in alarm, "don't let her kiss that soft baby so hard! She'll draw the blood right through her cheeks."

The nurse, who was a smiling woman, with a wart on her nose, began to frown a little, and grandma Read, patting Prudy's head, whispered to her that if she did not stop crying she must leave the room, as the noise she made disturbed her mother.

"Then I'll — I'll be — just as good as a lady, and I won't kiss her no more," replied little Prudy between her sobs, at the same time prying open baby's mouth with her busy fingers.

"Why, where's her teef? When you goin' to put in her teef?"

"O," said Susy, in an ecstasy, "isn't she such a velvet darling? What cunning little footsie-tootsies! shaped just like a flatiron! But I haven't seen her eyes yet."

"There, look now," said Prudy, puffing in the baby's face; "her eyes has came! I've *blowed* 'em open."

"O, fie, Miss Prudy," said the nurse, biting her lips; "now you'll certainly have to leave the room. It's not safe for you to come near this tiny bit of a baby. Nobody ever knows what you are likely to do next."

Little Prudy hung her head in great dismay.

"Then, if she goes, I'll have to go too, or there'll be a fuss," sighed Susy, stroking the baby's hair, which was as soft as a mouse's fur.

Both children cast a lingering look at the

bewitching little figure, so daintily wrapped in a fleecy blanket. Prudy felt tempted to snatch her up and give her a good hugging, but stood in mortal fear of the nurse. There was something awful about Mrs. Fling: Prudy presumed it was the wart on her nose.

When the children were outside the door, and grandma had closed it gently, they seated themselves on the upper step of the staircase, and began to talk over this strange affair.

"Don't you know what made me cry in there?" said Prudy. "The baby isn't only a *girl*, and that's why I cried."

For the moment Prudy fancied she was telling the truth.

Susy laughed. "Just to think of our keeping a boy in THIS house, Prudy Parlin!"

"O, no! *course* not!" returned her little sister, quickly; "*we* wouldn't keep a boy."

"You see," argued Susy, "it's boys that fire all the popguns, and whistle in your ears, and frighten you. Why, if this was a brother, we couldn't but just live! What made you cry for a brother, Prudy?"

"Poh, I didn't! I wouldn't have him for nothin' in my world! I'm glad God sended a girl, and that's what made me *laugh*."

"It seems so queer to think of it, Prudy, I don't know what to do with myself, I declare."

"Well, I know what *I'm* goin' to do. I'll give her my red pocket-dress. She's come clear down from God's house, and this is a dreffful cold world."

Susy knew that little Prudy's heart must be overflowing with sisterly love to the

baby, or she would not be willing to give her the pocket-dress.

"She can tuck her candy in," pursued Prudy; "'tisn't a believe-make, you know; there's a hole clear through. She can tuck her candy in, and her pyunes and pfigs, and teenty apples. Oho!"

"'Twill be as mother says about giving her your dress, Prudy; but we shall be glad to see you kind to the new sister," said Susy, who was fond of giving small lectures to Prudy. "We ought to be kind to her, for God sent her down on purpose. Of course it will be ME that will take the most care of her; but may be they'll let you watch her sometimes when she's asleep. Don't blow open her eyes any more, Prudy; that's very naughty. If we do just as we ought to, and are kind to her, she'll be a comfort, and grow up a lady!"

"O, will she?" asked Prudy, a little sadly. "I thought when she growed up she'd be a gemplum, like papa."

"What an idea! But that's just as much sense as you little bits o' children have! When you don't know about anything, Prudy, you may come and ask *me;* I'm most six!"

The new baby was very wonderful indeed. The first thing she did was to cry; the next was to sneeze. Prudy wished "all the people down street, and all the ladies that lived in the whole o' the houses, could see the new sister." Her heart swelled with pride when admiring ladies took the unconscious little creature in their arms, saying, "Really, it is a remarkably pretty child. What starry eyes! What graceful little fingers! Isn't her mouth shaped like Prudy's?"

Mrs. Parlin did not approve of cradles, and the nurse had a fashion of rolling the baby in a blanket and laying her down in all sorts of places. One day little Prudy flung herself into the big rocking-chair, not noticing the small bundle which lay there, under a silk handkerchief.

It was feared at first that the baby was crushed to death; but when she was heard to cry, Mrs. Parlin said, "We have great cause for thankfulness. So far as I can judge, it is only her *nose* that is broken!"

But the doctor pronounced the baby's bones as sound as ever.

"It is only little Miss Prudy whose nose is out of joint," added he.

Prudy ran to look in the glass, but could not see anything the matter with her nose, or anything that looked like "a joint." But after this she was as careful as a child of

her heedless age can be, not to injure her tender sister. She never again saw a silk handkerchief without shaking it to make sure there was not a baby under it.

It was a long while before the friends could decide upon a name for this beautiful stranger.

"For my part I have no choice," said Mr. Parlin, "and only one remark to make; call the child by her right name, whatever it may be, for I am very much opposed to pet names, of all sorts."

After every one else had spoken, Mrs. Parlin suggested that she would like to call the baby Alice Barrow, in honor of a dear friend, now in heaven.

She grew to be a fair, fat baby; and while her teeth were pricking through, like little pointed pearls, Susy's front teeth were dropping out. Then she grew to be a tod-

dling child; and while she was learning to walk, Prudy was beginning to sew patch-work. For time does not stand still; it passed, minute by minute, over the heads of Susy, Prudy, and Alice, as well as all the rest of the world. And soon it brought an end to Alice's babyhood.

CHAPTER II.

THE BONE MAN.

In spite of all Mr. Parlin had said against it, his little daughter was called by various pet names, — such as Midge, and Lady-bird, and Forget-me-not. Very few were the people who seemed to remember that her name was Alice.

She had a pair of busy dimples, which were a constant delight to her sisters.

"They twinkle, twinkle like little stars, only they don't shine," cried Prudy.

"Why," said Susy, "it's just as if her cheeks were made of water, and we were skipping pebbles in 'em."

And because of these tiny whirlpools, the child was usually called Dotty Dimple. From the time she could stand on her own little feet, she was a queen of a baby, and carried her small head very high. If she chanced to fall over a chair she seldom shed a tear, but thought the chair had treated her shamefully, and ought to be shut up in the closet. She never liked to have any one kiss her little bruises and pity her. It gave great offence if any one said, "Poor Alice!" She seemed to grow half a head taller in a minute, and looked as if she would say, "Needn't make a baby o' *me!*"

Not that she really said so. Talking was a thing she did not often attempt, though she sang a great deal, with a voice as clear as a flute. Prudy mourned because her tongue "did not grow fast enough." But where was the need of speech? If she

fancied she would like to be tossed to the "sky of the room,' she had only to pat her father's arm, and point upward, and the next minute she was flying to the ceiling, in high glee, and catching her breath. If she wished to go walking, it was enough to point to the door, and then to her hat. Her little forefinger was as good as most people's tongues, and served as a tolerably good guide-post, for it pointed the way she meant to go herself, and the way she wished others to go.

One day, while Mrs. Parlin was making currant jelly, she allowed Prudy to stay in the kitchen, and see her strain the beautiful crimson juice. But as for Alice, she had been found pounding eggs in a mortar, and must be taken away. She was placed in care of Susy, who led her out upon the piazza, where she could watch the people

passing by. "*Pedadder!*" cried Alice, showing her dimples. "Yes, *piazza;* so it is," said careless Susy, beginning to read a fairy story, and soon forgetting her quiet little charge.

Looking up at last, there was nothing to be seen of Alice. She could not have entered the house, for the front-door knob was above her reach.

Susy ran out upon the pavement, and looked up and down the street. Which way to go she could not tell, but started down street at full speed. "O, I'm sure I ought to be going *up street*," gasped she; "and if I was, I shouldn't think *that* was right either. Wish I knew which way I should *expect* Dotty to go, and then I'd know she'd gone just the other way."

After flitting hither and thither for some time, Susy ran home to give the alarm.

Without stopping to remove the jelly from the stove, Mrs. Parlin, Norah, and Prudy ran out of doors, and taking different directions, started in search of the missing child.

On High Street Prudy met a soap man, just reëntering his wagon at some one's door.

"O, have you seen my little sister?" cried Prudy, pressing her hand against her heart.

"Your little sister? And who may that be?" said the soap man, in a deep whisper; for he had such a severe cold on his lungs that for six months he had not spoken a loud word.

"O, her name is Alice Wheelbarrow Parlin, sir," whispered Prudy, in reply; "and she had on a pink dress, and her hair curls down her neck, and she has the

brightest eyes, and two years and a half of age, sir. O, where *do* you s'pose she's gone to?"

In her concern for Dotty, Prudy had forgotten her usual fear of strangers.

"I'm sorry you've lost your sister," whispered the soap man; "but as you seem to be pretty well tired out, suppose you jump into my cart and ride with me."

Prudy wondered why the man still kept whispering, but presumed there was some reason why the loss of Dotty ought to be kept secret. She looked at the long lumber-wagon, partly filled with barrels, and was on the point of replying, "No, thank you, sir," when a bright idea occurred to her.

"Do you s'pose, sir, I can get to my sister any quicker if I ride?"

"Well, can't say as to that, my dear,"

whispered the soap man, shoving a barrel to one side, "seeing as I don't know where your sister's to be found; but there's one thing certain — you'll get over the ground a good deal quicker riding than you would on your feet. I'm going to Pearl Street before I stop."

"Then I'll ride, sir, if you'll please lift me in," whispered poor Prudy, trembling with fear of the uncouth wagon and strange man, yet resolved to risk anything for Dotty's sake.

There was no seat in the wagon, and Prudy was obliged to stand up.

"Hold on to me, sissy," said the kind-hearted soap-boiler. "I reckon you ain't used to riding in this kind of shape. Why, lawful sakes, your face is as white as a pond-lily!"

"It's my heart," whispered Prudy, faintly;

"it *whisks* just like the eggs Norah beats in a bowl. But it's no matter, sir; I don't think I'm afraid, — or only a little speck," added she, in a lower whisper; for, though anxious to be polite, she did not mean to tell anything but the "white truth."

The little girl's gentle ways won the soap-boiler's heart at once. "What's your father's name, little dear?" inquired he, as they went clattering through the streets.

"His name is Mr. Edward Parlin. — But O, I don't see a single thing of Dotty!"

"Dotty! Why, who is Dotty?" asked the man, turning about, and gazing at his little passenger with a look of curiosity.

"Why, Mr. —, why, *sir*, don't you know?" replied the child, struck with a sudden fear that her strange companion was a crazy man. "O, my stars! don't you know what you took me up for? Didn't you hear?

My little sister ran off the piazza." Then Prudy repeated the words aloud, slowly and on a high key, anxious this time to make her meaning very clear. "She — ran — off — the — piazza, with a pink dress on, sir, and not a speck — of — a — hat. And I was stirring jelly on the stove, and never knew it till she was lost and gone. And we're all hunting, — me, and — mother, and — all. I thought you knew, sir; but if you didn't I guess I'd better get out!"

The good-natured soap man shook with laughter. "Excuse me, little miss," said he, "but the fact is, I understood you to say your sister's name was Alice Wheelbarrow Parlin, and that's why I was puzzled to know who you meant by Dotty. — But here we are at Pearl Street. Here, in this house, lives one of my best customers. Now, if you like, I'll lift you out, and you

can go with me and inquire for your little sister. Then you can ride again, for I'm going as far as Munjoy."

So saying, the man took Prudy out in his arms. She knew it was rather odd for a little girl like her to be going around to people's back doors with a stranger in a blue blouse; but it was all for Dotty's sake.

The man knocked with the handle of his whip, and a neat-looking servant girl appeared.

"Have you seen anything of a stray child?" was his first question.

"My little sister," cried Prudy, in breathless haste. "She had on a pink dress, and curls bareheaded."

"We have seen no such child pass this way," replied the girl, civilly. Prudy's eager face fell.

"I supposed likely as not you hadn't," said the soap man; "so now we'll proceed to business. You see I'm here with my wagon and barrels, and I suppose you perceive that I've come for your bones!"

These whispered words fell on Prudy's ears with terrible force. A vague terror seized her. "*I've come for your bones!*" What could he mean? Was he an ogre, right out of a fairy-book? What did he want of that poor woman's bones?

Without stopping to think twice, Prudy ran off with trembling haste, and by the time the astonished soap-boiler missed her she had reached Congress Street, and was still running.

The first thing she saw, as she entered her own door, was the fluttering of Dotty's pink dress. The runaway was safe and sound. She had only toddled off after a

man with a basket of images, calling out, "baa, baa," "moo, moo," "bow-wow." The end of it was, that the image man had given her a toy lamb, for which she had said, "How do," instead of thank you; and Florence Eastman had led her home.

Susy was heartily ashamed of her heedlessness.

"Now, mother," said she, "do you think, if I should be kept on bread and water for a whole day, I should learn to remember? You'll never trust Dotty with me again."

"Ah," said Mrs. Parlin, with a meaning smile; "the trouble is, Susy, you've made up your mind that your memory is good for nothing: you *expect* to forget! I *shall* trust you again, and you must fully resolve to do better."

Dotty was very proud of her "baa, baa," and insisted upon putting it in her bathing

tub every morning, and scrubbing it with her own hands.

Everybody laughed at Prudy's wild story of the soap-boiler.

"We were tired, my feet and I," said she, between laughing and crying; "but I never'd have rode with that whispering man if I'd known he was a *bone man!*"

CHAPTER III.

DOTTY'S VERSES.

By the time Alice Parlin was three years old she could prattle like a bobolink, and thought herself quite as old and wise as either of her sisters. Every Sunday morning it made her very wretched to see Susy and Prudy set out, with bright faces, for Sabbath school!

"Mayn't me go, too?" said she, plaintively. "Me's got the coop; *must* go to Sabber school!"

"O," replied Prudy, snatching a kiss from her pouting lips, "if you've got the croup you certainly can't go."

Dotty shook her curls. "Coop's went off now. Dotty'll go, all o' *you*."

"O, no, little sister; you'll stay at home and look at your pictures. That's the way *I* did when I was little."

"You mustn't *contraspute*," cried Dotty, shaking her elbows. "I *is* goin' to Sabber school." Then suddenly showing her dimples, she added with a bright smile, "'Cause I's your comfort, you know, Prudy, your darlin', precious little comfort; isn't I, Prudy?"

"Dear me," thought tender Prudy, "the poor little thing always has to stay at home. I'll ask mother to let her go with me next time. It is right for me to ask, for I'm sure I don't *want* her to go; so it isn't selfish!"

Mrs. Parlin had a great many doubts as to Dotty's good behavior, but at last con-

sented. She felt pretty safe to trust her with Prudy, who was very patient, and had even now a memory longer than Susy's.

Before the time came to start for Sabbath school, Dotty stood a long while before the mirror, looking up at her gay hat and down at her cunning gaiters. She liked nice clothes, and it pleased her to see herself so prettily dressed.

"Is that you, O you darlin' Dotty?" said she, nodding her vain little head, and smiling till her dimples "twinkled." "Well, good by, Dotty; I's goin' to Sabber school."

"O, hurry, hurry!" cried Susy; "we'll surely be late."

They stepped out upon the pavement, Dotty walking between her sisters.

"We can't hurry, you know," said Prudy, "because Dotty's feet are so little."

"*I* never should have thought of bringing

her," exclaimed Susy. "Any one would think she'd been eating snails. When she takes up her foot she shakes it before she puts it down."

"O, what a 'tory!" said Dotty Dimple, tossing her head. "I never shaked my foot; did I, Prudy?"

But Prudy had suddenly turned about, and gone back to the house, saying she had forgotten something. She had left home without kissing her mother good by, and nothing could console Prudy for the loss of one of her mother's caresses.

"There, girls, I'm back again," said she, catching her breath. "Now, Dotty, let's we see how fast we can walk."

"Drefful dirty," said Dotty, scowling at her overshoes.

"Yes," replied Susy, "this snow has been round on the ground a good while. It's

most time it went back to heaven to get clean."

"What do you mean by snow's going to heaven?" said Prudy, gazing at the street, which was half white and half black.

"Why, you see," answered Susy, "it says, 'God scattereth his snow like wool, and his hoar-frost like the shining pearls.' And my Sabbath school teacher tells us that after a while the sun draws it back, and makes clouds of it, as 'twas before. So, you see, the snow and the rain keep sprinkling down, and then rising up to the sky again."

"Why—ee!" said Prudy; "how does the snow go up? I never saw it going."

"Indeed you have, Prudy. It goes puffing up in fog. Why, it's just as if the snow was a teakettle, and it keeps steaming out clouds."

"O, does it, Susy? Now, when it fogs, I shall know the snow 's going up."

"Please don't talk any more," returned Susy, suddenly lowering her voice; "we must be very quiet on the street, for it's Sunday. You don't mean any harm, Prudy, but you say so much that I'm afraid I shall forget my lesson. I keep saying it over to myself, you know."

Susy and Prudy belonged in different classes. Susy recited from a question book, and Prudy learned verses from the Bible. Dotty Dimple went with Prudy into Miss Carlisle's class, where eight or ten little girls were already seated.

"It's my little sister, Miss Carlisle," whispered blushing Prudy. "Mother allowed her to come to-day because she isn't coming any more. Will you please excuse her?"

Smiling, Miss Carlisle was very willing to "excuse" Dotty for her sweet sister's sake. But Prudy felt rather nervous. She made a place beside herself for Dotty, who folded her small hands and sat as still as a marble cherub; but what odd thing she might take it into her busy brain to do, no one could tell.

When Prudy's turn came she repeated her verse: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips."

"An excellent text," said Miss Carlisle. "It would make me very happy if I thought you would remember it all your life, darling. Do you think you understand it?"

"Mother says it means, 'Be careful to say only what is true and good,'" replied Prudy, in a low voice.

"That is right," said Miss Carlisle; "but do you understand what is called the 'figure

of speech' in the verse? Do you know what a watch is?"

"A little thing that ticks."

"There is another kind, my dear. We have in cities *watchmen*, to guard us and see that all goes right while we sleep."

"O, I know," replied Prudy, quickly; "the verse asks God to give us a *conscience* to walk back and forth before our lips while we talk!"

Miss Carlisle went on to say more about the watch, while Dotty fixed her bright eyes on her face, thinking, "What booful flowers those is in her bonnet! Where did she pick 'em?"

The next verse was Sadie Bicknell's:—

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Dotty listened to this, and Miss Carlisle's remarks upon it, with the most solemn ear-

nestness, hoping to learn why it was that people should sit with a lamp shining on their feet. She thought she could now see why Prudy loved to go to "Sabber school;" it was because she heard so many funny things.

Soon all the little girls had repeated their texts; but, to her great surprise, Dotty had not been called upon to say or do a single thing. It was a marked slight. She hardly knew whether to be angry or not. "I guess the lady didn't see me," thought Dotty. So she cleared her throat with a loud noise, which echoed across the room. Then Miss Carlisle looked at her and smiled. She was off the seat, standing on her tiptoes. Prudy tried to draw her back; but so much the more Dotty persisted. She shook off her sister's hand.

"I wasn't a 'peakin' to you," said she.

"Never mind her, Prudy," said Miss Carlisle, for the poor girl was crimson with shame; "let your little sister come to me; perhaps she wishes to tell me something."

Miss Carlisle bent forward, and let Dotty place her rosy lips close to her face.

"Now, what do you wish, little one?"

"You didn't hear me say my *verse*," whispered Dotty, in a tone of pique.

"Your verse? Did you learn one, child?"

"Yes, 'm, I did. I learned it all day yes'day."

"O, very well! then say it, by all means, dear."

Prudy's face expressed perfect despair. She tried to hush Dotty; but one might as well coax the wind to stop blowing. The child's thoughts had been like caged birds, and now out they must fly.

"Shall I *whisker?*" asked Dotty.

"No, say your verse aloud."

The child planted herself in front of the class, and recited, in a high key, and with the greatest delight, —

"What you thpose um had for supper?
B'ack-eyed beans, un bread un butter."

It was not possible to help smiling. Prudy, in spite of her shame and distress, shook with laughter; but it was a laughter just ready to tremble into tears.

"I'll never ask mother to let her come again, if I once *do* get her safe home," thought outraged Prudy.

Dotty was not allowed to attend Sabbath school again that year; but it was a long time before she forgot some of the things she had heard Miss Carlisle say. Many of the strange words rang in her ears for

weeks afterwards, though she said nothing about them.

One day she rushed into the nursery out of breath. Prudy was kneeling before her little trunk, putting in order the paper dolls, which Dotty had scattered over the floor. They were a sad sight. Some of them had lost their heads, and some had lost their fine clothes, which are worth as much as heads, any day — to dolls.

But Dotty did not stop to look at the mischief she had made. Her thoughts were of other matters. She had brought from the kitchen a "Tom Thumb lamp" and a bunch of matches.

Without a word she seated herself on the floor, behind her sister, and drew off her shoes and stockings. She looked for a moment at her little pink toes, then rubbed the whole bunch of matches on the carpet, saying to herself, "A lamp to my feet."

But, somehow, the lamp would not light itself. Dotty did not know how to turn back the chimney, and, though there was certainly blaze enough in the matches, it did not catch the wick. It leaped forward and caught the skirt of Prudy's dress.

"You're burnin' afire! You're burnin' afire!" shouted Dotty, dancing around her sister. Prudy now felt the heat, and screamed too, bringing her mother and Norah to the spot at once. The flames were soon smothered in a rug, and so Prudy's life was mercifully saved.

It was some time before any one understood what Dotty had been trying to do with a light.

"I was just only a-puttin' a lamp to my feet," sobbed she. "I learned it to Sabber school."

But the little one's rare tears were soon dried by a romp with Zip out of doors.

PRUDY'S DRESS ON FIRE.

Page 44.

"It's queer how things always happen just right," said Prudy, still trembling from her fright. "You said, if I'd been wearing my calico, mother, I'd have been scorched. And you know it was only the littlest while ago I put on this blue delaine, to go to auntie's in!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE NESTLINGS.

An hour or two after this, Mrs. Parlin, Susy, Prudy, and Zip went to visit Mrs. Eastman, who now lived a little way out of town.

Dotty was driving ducks, and did not see her mother and sisters when they started.

"Where is they, Nono? And where's Prudy?"

"Gone walking. Your mamma told you they were going," replied Norah, setting a basin of water and a brush and comb on the stand.

"Well, Prudy's runned away," cried Dotty. "Naughty girl; made out o' dirt!"

"Come here, Miss Dimple, and let me brush your hair."

"Well, here's my hair, Nono, but you mustn't pull it; 'tisn't *your* hair! O, I want to kiss my mamma, I do!"

"Your mamma will be back again this evening."

"Don't want to kiss her in the evening — want to kiss her now!"

"What makes you in such a hurry to kiss your mother?"

"O, I just only want to tell her to w'ip Prudy. Naughty Prudy runned away! Made out o' dirt!"

Dotty always looked very low-spirited while her long hair was being curled over a stick, and now was more unhappy than usual, for it was one of her "temper days."

But at last cousin Percy Eastman happened to call in, and declared he must take

his pretty cousin home with him in the carriage.

"I'll get her ready," said Norah; "but you're sure to be sorry if you take her, for she's brimming over with mischief to-day."

Dotty danced like a piece of thistle-down. "There, Nono," said she, "I's goin' to auntie's my own self; Prudy'll have to give up."

All this time Mrs. Parlin and the two older children were having a fine walk. It was a bright June day. Prudy said she had to sing to herself, for all the things she saw looked as happy as if they were alive. As Prudy talked, she flew from flower to flower, like a honey-bee.

"I can't wait for Prudy to walk so zig-zag," said Susy.

Mrs. Parlin suggested that Susy should keep on, and tell her aunt Eastman they

were coming. Then she allowed Prudy to walk as "zigzag" as she pleased; for Mrs. Parlin had long patience with her children.

"O, mamma," said Prudy, suddenly stopping short, and standing on one foot; "if there isn't a cow!"

"I see, my dear, she is eating the sweet grass."

"Yes, 'm; but don't its horns flare out like a pitchfork? Do you s'pose he knows how easy he could toss folks right up in the air?"

"I hope my little daughter is not afraid of a gentle cow."

"No, indeed," cried Prudy, clinging fast to her mother's hand. "Poh! if I was afraid of a cow I'd be a cow—ard. I'd as lief he'd see me as not, if you'll shake your parasol at him, mamma."

Prudy breathed more freely when the cow was out of sight.

Soon she saw something which caused her to forget her terror. Peeping in among the branches of a small tree, she espied what she called a "live birds' nest." Never having seen any young birds before, she wondered at first "who had picked off their feathers." The wee things seemed to be left to themselves while their mother was away providing supper.

"Haven't they very big, stretchy mouths, for such small birdies?" said Prudy. "Aren't you afraid they'll crack their mouths in two, gaping so, mamma?"

"They are only hungry, child. Suppose you feed them with a bit of a berry."

Prudy nipped a strawberry into three parts with her thumb and forefinger, and dropped the pieces into their mouths.

"O, mamma, they swallowed it whole! they swallowed it whole! Their teeth haven't come!"

Prudy's fresh delight and surprise were so pleasant to witness that her mother allowed her to linger for a while, mincing berries for the nestlings' supper.

When, at last, they reached Mrs. Eastman's, Prudy eagerly described the young wonders she had found.

"It was like a story," said she, "of little widow-children, — how the mother was dead, and the children had to stay alone."

"Children are never widows," said Susy, laughing; "it isn't possible! But if their parents die, they are orphans sometimes."

"That's just what I meant," exclaimed Prudy, looking crestfallen. "I should think you might know what I mean, 'thout laughing at me, either."

Before long Dotty Dimple arrived, in great triumph. She threw her chubby arms about her mother's neck, saying, "Is I your little comfort, mamma? I camed in the hoss and carriage. S'an't give Prudy no supper — will you? 'Cause Prudy runned away!"

"I should not have allowed this child to come," said Mrs. Parlin, at the tea table; "but cousin Percy always picks up the stray babies, and gives them a ride."

Dotty looked as if she could easily forgive her cousin Percy. But there was one thing that made her nice supper taste like "spoiled nectar," and that was the sight of Prudy enjoying her strawberries and cream.

If she had runned away, as Dotty insisted upon believing, why was she not shut up in the closet? Strange to say, dearly as Dotty loved this kind sister, she enjoyed seeing

her punished. She was vexed because Prudy was allowed, after all, to sit at the table with the rest of the family. The little creature was very tired, for she had driven ducks all the long summer day. She was also a little sleepy; and, more than all, it was one of her "temper days," when everything went wrong.

After tea she had a serious quarrel with her little cousin Johnny, over a dead squirrel, which they both tried to feed with sugared water, from a teaspoon.

"Johnny," cried she, "don't you touch his mouf any more! If you do, I s'an't w'ip you, Johnny, but I'll sp'inkle some ashes on your head! Yes, I will."

Johnny, heedless of the threat, tried again to force open Bunny's stiff mouth. Dotty's beautiful eyes blazed.

Without a word she walked off proudly

to the kitchen, and came back with a handful of cold ashes, which she freely sifted into Johnny's flaxen hair. Mrs. Parlin saw that it was high time to take her youngest daughter home.

"O, mother," said Prudy, who always felt herself disgraced by her little sister's bad conduct, "sometimes Dotty pretty nearly makes you cry! Don't you almost wish you hadn't any such little girl?"

"My dear child, I am her *mother*, and she could hardly do anything so naughty that I should cast her out of my heart. When she has these freaks of temper, I think, 'God bears with me, and I will try to bear with my little one. I will wait. One of these days, when her reason grows, she will be a real blessing to us all.'"

Mrs. Parlin proceeded to put on Dotty's outer wrapping, saying she must be taken

home. The child struggled and screamed, and declared she "*would* be good, she *would* be a comfort;" but her mother was firm, though her sweet temper never for a moment forsook her. Susy and Prudy looked on, and learned a lesson in patience which was worth twenty lectures.

Percy Eastman was as glad to carry his spirited little cousin back as he had been to bring her to his house. Mrs. Parlin rode too; but Susy and Prudy walked.

When they came to the tree which contained the birds' nest, Prudy parted the branches, but the nestlings were not to be seen; the mother-bird had gathered them under her wings, out of sight.

"Hush!" whispered Susy; "hear them peep! Let's go; we'll frighten the old birdie out of her wits."

"I wish you could see them, Susy; then

you'd know how cunning they are; and now you never'll know. But it doesn't seem a bit like orphan children since their mother's got home."

"Makes me think of *our* mamma, and *her* three little children," said Susy, taking her sister's hand.

"Yes," said Prudy, her face radiant with a glow of love, warm from her heart; "how good our mother always is, and always was, before ever our *reasons* grew! Think what we'd do this night, Susy Parlin, if there wasn't any *mother* to our house!"

CHAPTER V.

FANNY HARLOW'S PARTY.

"Kiss me, little sister," said Prudy, "and let me go, for I must get ready for the party."

"I know where you're goin'," said Dotty; "why can't I go too?"

Little did innocent Prudy dream of the queer thoughts which were chasing one another in her little sister's brain. After she and Susy had gone, and the house was quite still, Dotty stood at the window, looking down street. It was a lovely day; the clouds were "softer than sleep."

"O, my suz!" said Dotty Dimple; "there

they go, way off, way off, Susy and Prudy. Bof of 'em are all gone. Nobody at home but me. Didn't ask me to her party, Fanny Harlow didn't."

Dotty heaved a deep sigh, took her black baby out of its cradle, and shook it with all her might.

"What you lookin' to me for, Phib? I wasn't a 'peakin' to you. I'm goin' to cover you all up, Phib, so you won't hear me think."

Then Dotty looked out of the window again. "What a good little girl I am," thought she, "not to be a cryin'! Prudy 'd cry! There goes the blacksmif's shop." Dotty meant the blacksmith. "His mother lets him go everywhere. Everybody's mother lets 'em go everywhere."

A prettily dressed little girl passed the window.

"How do you do, little girl?" whispered Dotty, in a voice so low that even the cat did not hear. "O, what a booful hat you've got! Would your mamma make you wear a *rainy* dress, like mine? No, she wouldn't. Your mamma lets you go to parties all the days only Sundays. My mamma has sticked me into the nursery, and nothin' but a dar'-needle to sew with! O, hum! And I haven't runned away since forever 'n ever! They don't 'low me to run away. Wish Fanny Harlow 'd asked me to her party. I know why she never! 'Cause she forgot I was born."

Presently there was a sound of little feet. Dotty was pattering up stairs.

"Didn't know I was sewing with a dar'-needle — did you, mamma? Mayn't I go to Fanny Harlow's party?"

Mrs. Parlin was busy with visitors, and

did not pay much heed to her little daughter. So Dotty crept close to her mother's side, and buried her roguish face behind her head-dress.

"Wish you'd please to punish me, mamma," said she; "punish me now; I'm *a-goin'* to be naughty!"

Mrs. Parlin smiled, and reminded Dotty that it was not polite to whisper in company. Then she went on talking with her friends, and Miss Dimple slipped quietly out of the room.

"I know I don't ought to," mused the child; "I'm a-goin' to do wicked, and get punished; but I *want* to do wicked, and get punished. I've been goody till I'm all tired up!"

Having made this decision, she went to Prudy's closet, and looked at the dresses hanging wrong side outward on the pegs.

"This is a booful one," said she, pulling down a scarlet merino. She put on the dress, forgetting, in her guilty haste, to take off her own blue one.

"O, my suz! I never did see!" said Dotty, puffing and tugging in her efforts to fasten the frock. "My mother must make Prudy's clo'es bigger 'n this; yes, she must. It chokes."

However, by dint of much hard work she succeeded in squeezing her round little figure into the red merino, and fastening two of the buttons. "O, hum!" sighed she; "this dress is so tight I shan't grow to-day!"

Dotty had a great admiration for her mother's purple breakfast shawl, which she now threw over her little shoulders with tremulous delight. Nono's Sunday bonnet she next laid her naughty hands upon.

Very charming was this bonnet in Dotty's eyes, as it was made of claret-colored silk, and was all on fire inside with scorching red and yellow flames. It was so huge and so deep that Dotty's small face under it looked as if it had got lost in Mammoth Cave.

"Now I've got every single clo'es on me. Guess there won't anybody think I'm a boy this time," mused she, giving a last glance at the mirror; "there won't anybody laugh, and say, 'How d'ye do, my fine little fellow?'"

Very well pleased with herself, Dotty dressed "brother Zip" in Prudy's waterproof cloak, and they both stole out by the side door, without being seen. But which way to go Dotty could not tell.

"Where *is* the-girl-that-has-the-party's house?" thought she, under her bonnet.

"Well, it's by the stone lions, 'most up to the North Pole. Now, Zippy, if we keep a-goin' we shall get there, and we'll see some girls out by the door."

Zip wagged his faithful tail, which was quite hidden under the cloak, and they both trudged on, Dotty's heart quivering with wicked delight.

She happened to be going in the right direction, and at last did really reach the "house by the stone lions." Several young girls were indeed playing in the yard.

"What little image is that, travelling this way?" cried Florence Eastman, holding up both hands.

"A beggar child, perhaps," replied Fanny Harlow. "'Sh! 'sh! don't laugh!"

"I don't see anything but a walking bonnet," tittered one of the girls; "don't it look like a chaise top? O, look, look! as

true as you live, that thing that's hopping along beside her is a dog!"

The little figure now approached very slowly, its head bent down, its fingers in its mouth; though the girls saw nothing but a big, drooping bonnet, a purple shawl, and a pair of tiny feet peeping out from a red dress.

"I guess she came from Farther India," suggested Susy, that being the most foreign land she could think of.

Dotty now gave a loud knock at the gate, and peeped in between the bars. In doing so she had to push back the chaise-top, and the little girls had a full view of her face.

"O, Dotty Dimple Parlin!" screamed her sisters, in dismay.

Fanny Harlow hastened to open the gate.

"Where did you come from, you naughty

thing?" whispered Susy, with a crimson face.

Dotty's sole answer was a violent sneeze, which burst off two buttons, the only ones which fastened the scarlet merino.

"I've broke my dress," said Dotty, calmly.

The little girls were greatly amused, but Dotty eyed them with such a gaze of lofty disdain that they kept their faces as straight as possible.

"Poor thing," said cousin Florence; "how tired you must be! Don't you want to sit right down in this iron chair?"

Dotty's bright eyes flashed. "Don't you pity *me*, Flossy! Now 'top it!"

"How shall we ever get her home?" thought the two older sisters, in alarm; for they saw by the motion of Dotty's elbows,

that she had made up her mind to queen it over the whole company.

"Look here, Dotty," said Prudy, going up to her, and kissing her; "did mother say you might come, darling?"

Dotty rubbed off the kiss, and made no answer.

"Don't you think 'twould be a nice plan," whispered Prudy, "for me and Susy to draw you home in a little carriage? And I'll ask mother to forgive you."

"O, yes," said Susy, in an agony of mortification; "now do!"

Dotty looked as unmoved as one of the stone lions, and took no notice of the request.

"What made they put two trees 'side that one tree?" asked she, by way of changing the subject.

"Now, Dotty, you will go, that's a little love," said Susy, wringing her hands. "Only think, if you don't you'll lose five kisses to-night, and I dare say mamma will punish you, too."

"There's a man goin' by — old all over, and a white whisker. Who is it?" inquired Dotty, changing the subject again. "The whisker looks like snow, 's if his chin's cold!"

"Never mind the man," returned Prudy. "If you'll go I'll spend my five cents, and buy you some pep'mints."

"I'd rather have pickled limes," said Dotty, thoughtfully.

"So you shall," cried eager Susy; "and you'll be the sweetest little pet, and ride home like a lady."

"So I will," said Dotty, serenely, "when I've had my supper."

Susy's face fell. If the little piece of obstinacy would stay, she *would;* and Mrs. Harlow politely declared they should all be delighted. But how would she behave at the table? Her manners were as yet unformed; she needed line upon line and precept upon precept. It was dreadful to think of her taking supper at one of the nicest houses in the city, in that dress, and without her watchful mother too! It was a severe trial to Susy. Prudy was also distressed, but her "sky-like spirit" brightened again speedily.

The little girls all crowded about Dotty, begging her to join in their games; but she said it would "hurt her big bonnet," which she could not be persuaded to take off, because she fancied it added something to her importance.

Fanny Harlow brought out a picture book for the little runaway.

"I'm afraid she'll tear it," said careful Prudy.

Dotty looked at her sister with a withering glance, and, in her eagerness to prove that she knew how to handle books, suddenly tore one of the leaves. She was surprised and mortified; but her self-esteem was not easily crushed.

"There, Prudy," said she, pertly; "what made you let me do it for? You *said* I'd tear it!"

Mrs. Harlow hastened supper, fearing that Mrs. Parlin might be anxious about her little daughter. Dotty was placed between her two sisters. Susy pinned a napkin about the child's neck, and in a whisper begged to be allowed to spread her bread and butter for her. Dotty had worn the air of a princess royal all the afternoon; but now, seated in a high chair, and surrounded

by a group of admiring little girls, she felt like a crowned queen. Taking her bread in both hands, she crumbed it into her goblet of milk, and began to dip it out with the handle of her fork. The girls looked on and smiled, and Dotty gave a little purr of satisfaction.

"Everybody 'll think mother doesn't teach her good manners," thought poor Susy, hardly knowing whether she ate bread or ashes.

"Dear, dear," said Prudy to herself; "Dotty may die some time, and then I should be sorry, and cry. I'll keep thinking of that, so I can bear her awful actions better."

The little princess, from her throne in the high chair, did very rude things; such as coughing and blowing crumbs into her plate, drumming with her feet, and beating

lime with her fork and spoon. When bread was offered, she said, —

"I don't like *baker's* bread. I like *daily* bread."

But this was all the remark she made during the whole meal. At last she ceased eating, coughing, and drumming: there was a "flash of silence."

Everybody looked up. Dotty's eyes were closed, and her head was swaying from side to side, like a heavy apple stuck on a knitting needle — she was fast asleep.

She was wheeled home in a small carriage, followed by a guard of all the girls. Next day she was duly punished by being tied to the bedpost with the clothes-line.

"I wish her *reasons* would begin to grow," sighed Prudy. "I never can feel happy when Dotty gets into a fuss."

"I've been thinking it all over," replied

Susy, "and I've made up my mind that God allows her to mortify you and me. You know we must have some kind of a trial, or we shouldn't grow gentle and sweet tempered."

"As mother is," added Prudy.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LITTLE TEACHER.

At last Dotty's "reasons" did begin to grow. Her mother was too wise and kind to allow her to have her own naughty way; and by the time she was four years old she had very few "temper days," and seemed to be growing quite lovely.

But her sisters were troubled because she had not yet learned to read. Prudy remembered how ashamed she herself had felt when she first set out in earnest to go to school. For some time after her lameness she was so delicate that no pains had been taken to teach her to read.

"My little sister must never be so stupid as I was," thought Prudy, uneasily.

Sometimes visitors inquired if Miss Dotty knew her letters, and poor Prudy blushed with shame when Mrs. Parlin calmly replied that she did not.

"I'm sure mother feels mortified," thought Prudy; "but she holds up her head, and tries to make the best of it. I'll not say a word to anybody, but I mean to teach my little sister my own self!"

So one Wednesday afternoon, when Susy was away, Prudy called Dotty into the nursery, and shut the door.

"What you want me of?" asked the child.

"I want to tell you something nice. Don't you wish you knew your A, B, C's, darling? There, that's what it is."

Dotty shook her head three or four times, and looked down at the carpet.

"Why, Dotty Dimple, you oughtn't to do so. You must answer when a question is asked. Wouldn't you like to learn your letters, like a goody girl, so you can read the nice books? Now be polite, and speak."

"I don't want to be polite, and speak, nor I don't want to learn my letters, like a goody gell; so there!" replied Dotty, seizing the kitty, and wrapping her in a shawl.

"O, Dotty Dimple!" said Prudy, in a tone of deep distress; "how old you're getting to be! just think!"

"I'm four years old, and I weigh four pounds," answered Dotty, drawing out her little cab, and throwing the muffled kitty into it, as if she had been a roll of cloth.

"O, my stars, Dotty, I can't bear to have you talk so."

Dotty tucked in the kitty's tail, and drew the carriage about the room, to give "Pusheen" an airing. "Pusheen" was her kitty's name in Irish.

"You can't think how dreadful it is, Dotty, to grow up and not know anything!"

Dotty turned a short corner. Pusheen had a fall; down came the little cab, kitty and all.

"To grow up and not know anything," continued Prudy. "O, it's enough to break anybody's heart!"

"Be you goin' to cry?" said Dotty, in a soft voice, kneeling, and peeping up into Prudy's eyes, with some curiosity.

Prudy was obliged to smile, but hid her face in the sofa-pillow, and hoped Dotty did not see her. She found she must hit upon some other plan. Dotty could not

"BE YOU GOIN' TO CRY?"

Page 76.

be made to feel the terrors of growing up a dunce.

"Now, little sister," said she, "if you'll let me be your teacher, and keep school here in the nursery —"

"O, hum! A *little gell* keep school! Would you send me to the bottom of the foot?"

"O, no! I'll do something for you — let's me see!"

"Well, what?" cried Dotty, her eyes sparkling like blue gems; "what'll you do for me, Prudy?"

Prudy thought a minute. Meanwhile the muffled kitty slowly freed herself from the shawl, and slyly leaped to the top of the bureau, out of reach of her little mistress.

"O, Prudy," said Dotty, dancing about; "do something quick."

"Listen, dear! Will you promise to

learn to read if I'll tell you a story about every single letter there is on your blocks?"

"How long a story? As long as this room? Yes, I'll promige," cried Dotty, with a gleeful laugh. "Go get the stories, and tell 'em this minute!"

"Now we'll begin," said Prudy, no less delighted, pouring the blocks out of the box upon the floor. "I'll ring the little tea-bell, and call the school to order. The school means *you*, and you must walk in and take your seat."

"Yes, if you'll let me sit in the rocking-chair!"

"O, but that is mine, because I'm the teacher."

"Then I'm goin' off into the kitchen," said Dotty, loftily, "and I don't know as I'll come back. I won't promige."

"O, take the rocking-chair!" replied Prudy, quickly. "I'll sit on the ottoman; it's just as good. Glad you spoke of it, Dotty; 'twouldn't be proper for the teacher to rock. Hark! now I tingle the bell. School 's begun!"

Dotty walked along, and very demurely seated herself in the big chair.

"Here," said Prudy, showing her a block, "is your first letter; guess what the picture means, and I'll tell you the name of the letter."

"That?" said Dotty, glancing at it; "that's a monkey; what you s'pose?"

"O, no! it's pretty near a monkey, not quite: it's what we call an *ape*."

"A nape!" echoed Dotty, pointing at it, and laughing. "O, my! you don' know nothin' at all but just — do you, Prudy Parlin? Funny gell to keep school! Didn't

you never see a monkey? I've seen 'em dancing tummy-tum-tum, and a man making music with a little mite of a churn."

"Well, perhaps this is a monkey, and ape is its baby name," said Prudy, doubtfully

"Got a face like a dried apple — hasn't he?" said the young pupil, admiringly. "Rally round the flag, boys!"

"Hush! You mustn't sing in school. The name of this letter is A. Look at it ever so long, and say it over."

"A, A, A," repeated Dotty, to the tune of "John Brown."

Prudy took courage. "All right, only you mustn't sing. I couldn't speak the letter better myself than you do, *so* soon. A stands for ape."

"No, for monkey."

The little teacher yielded the point. She

had begun her school with plenty of love and patience.

"Now tell a story," said Dotty, settling herself in the chair.

"Can't you say 'please'?" suggested Prudy, mildly. "'Please' is but a little word, and 'thank you' is not long."

"Well, please, and thank you, — 'bout a ape."

"I know a real nice one. Once there was a monkey — "

"No, a ape."

"Well, a ape, then. But I didn't start right. Once Mr. 'Gustus Allen sailed round the world."

"Did? Who sailed him?"

"O, he went in one of those ships that go puffing out of the bay. And he had a little ape, named Jacky."

"How did you know? You wasn't there."

"O, he told me about it. He was the brightest little creature, Jacky was. When he was cold, Mr. Allen used to tuck him right in his bosom. Sometimes he got into mischief, he knew so much."

"Did he know as much as Zip? Did he ever talk in meetin'?"

"No, he couldn't bark the way Zip did at the lecture, but he chattered, as we do when our teeth are cold. When he'd been doing mischief he'd run round the floor of the ship, wagging his head the way I do now, as if he was as innocent as a whole lot of kittens. Why, he acted as you did, Dotty, when you was a little girl, and picked the inside out of that custard pie."

"Ahem!" said Dotty. "I guess you think you're talkin' to somebody else, Prudy Parlin! I don't like your story; wish you'd stop."

"But I was going to tell you how Jacky got sick, and there were ever so many more monkeys on board —"

"On what board?"

"On the ship. And they took care of Jacky, and brought him his supper, as if they were folks."

"What did he have for supper?"

"O, nuts and things, on a wooden plate."

"I wish I was a monkey!"

"O, Dotty Dimple, that's a horrid speech!"

"Then I don't want to be a monkey; I want to be a ape. I wish I could go puffing round the world in a ship."

"Well, Dotty, this isn't keeping school. What letter have you learned?"

"I didn't learn a letter; I learned a story. You're a funny gell to keep a *story*-school!"

Prudy held up the block.

"O, that picked thing? You called it a ape!"

"Why, Dotty Parlin! that's A."

"A *what?*"

"I said *A*," repeated Prudy, with emphasis; "only just *A*."

"Why, 'tisn't A *nothing* — is it?"

"Dear me," thought Prudy, "I don't see how folks do keep school. I'm getting just as hungry — and cross!"

When Dotty had learned A so well that she knew it at a glance, her teacher proceeded to the next letter, which stood on the block for a bat. Dotty said the picture looked "like Zip with an umbrella over him."

After the second story, she was tired of the business.

"Look out the window, Prudy. See that whale! O, you April fool!"

The young teacher sighed over her sister's light-minded behavior. When they came to C, which stood for cat, Dotty seized her kitty and tried to feed her with lozenges. But Pusheen turned away her head with a gesture which signified, —

"Candy isn't fit to touch. I'd eat a mouse with you, with pleasure."

"Talk," said Dotty; "say 'thank you,' Pusheen! No, indeed, you needn't do it; I's just in fun. God didn't give you any teef to talk with, Pussy; so you can't talk."

"Now, Dotty, this next letter is D."

"O, Prudy, I wish you'd hush! I've got the earache."

"Ah, well!" thought the gentle teacher, with a sigh; "I'll try again, some other

day. I'll not give it up. Grandma says, 'Time and patience make the 'mulberry leaf into satin.' I don't know what that means, only it's something about *perseverance.*"

CHAPTER VII.

BOTH SIDES OF A STORY.

THE little school was not resumed for some time. Not that Prudy had forgotten it, by any means; but the next Saturday she had visitors, and the following Wednesday an exciting event occurred. It concerned Susy's pony. Percy Eastman said he was called Wings "because he hadn't any feet." Susy was vexed at this remark, and Prudy, taking her part, said, "Percy is such a *pert* boy;" adding next moment, "What *is* pert?"

But Percy only meant, that the pony sadly needed some new shoes; and this was very true.

Now it happened that Mr. Parlin, being too busy to go himself, sent Eddy Johnson and Charley Piper with Wings to the blacksmith's shop. It seemed to Susy that the boys were gone a long while, for it was Wednesday afternoon, and she was impatient for a ride. She sat down to practise a little, but her mind was out of doors, and the unwilling piano seemed crying out to be let alone.

"I can't play," said Susy, decidedly; "and that's the truth."

At that moment a sweet little voice was heard, singing, "John's brown buddy;" and Dotty Dimple's head and shoulders were thrust into the room.

"I've broked it," said she; "I've broked it all to smash."

"Broke what, for pity's sakes?"

"Your teapot," replied Dotty, in a very heerful voice.

"O, I never did, in all my life, see such a child," wailed Susy. "What made you go and meddle with my dear little gold-edged tea-set?"

Dotty looked like an injured lamb, brushed the wayward hair out of her eyes, and gazed wistfully into her sister's face.

"Is I your little comfort, Susy? Is I your little comfort?"

"No," cried Susy, wavering between a smile and a tear; "no, indeed! To think of *your* being a comfort! O, my stars!"

"Well, then," continued the little one, in a soothing, cooing tone, "then I never broked it; it broked itself!"

So saying, she produced from the depths of her pocket the fragments of the gilt-edged toy. They were past the healing power even of Spalding's glue, that was certain. At the painful sight, poor Susy's

patience flew into as many pieces as the teapot.

"O, you naughty, naughty thing, to say it broke itself!"

"Then it didn't," replied the little culprit, not a whit dismayed. "Then 'twas Prudy. We was playing 'thimble-coop.' *She* broked it all to smash!"

"O, mother," said Susy, running out to the kitchen; "Dotty's making up fibs as fast as she can speak! You'll have to shut her up in the closet."

"Not so fast, my dear. Let us wait till we hear both sides of the story."

And, as it turned out, Dotty really did not deserve to be punished for wrong stories. She and Prudy had each assisted in breaking the teapot; one had knocked it off the bureau, and the other had stepped on it. But Dotty, who gloried in "a fuss,"

had begged to be the one to tell Susy the startling news. She wished to see her eyes flash, and hear her expressions of surprise. She knew that, however angry Susy might be, there was one magical sentence which would always bring her to terms: "Dotty'll go out doors, 'out her hat, get cold, have the *coop*, and DIE!"

At the bare mention of such a fearful thing, Susy's anger was sure to cool at once. This time Dotty varied her method a little.

"See," said she, looking out of the window; "the boys has came."

Of course that was the last of Susy's thoughts about the teapot. She rushed out of doors bareheaded, followed by Dotty. Eddy Johnson was just hitching Wings to a post near the gate.

"Have they *shoed* him?" said Susy.

"*Shoed* him? I should think they had ail of that," replied Eddy, indignantly.

"Booted him, more like," muttered Charley Piper, in the same tone.

"Why, what do you mean, boys?" said Susy, patting the pony, and gazing tenderly into his eyes.

"O, we don't mean anything, as I know of. You must run into the house and ask your mother to come out here," said Eddy, mysteriously.

"Why, it's my own pony, that my own father gave me, and if there's anything the matter with it I should think you might tell," cried Susy, her voice shaking with a vague dread of some terrible mishap.

"Well, may be there isn't anything ails him," returned Eddy, coolly. "I never said there was; but your mother 'll know!"

"O, Dotty Dimple, run into the house

this very minute, please to," exclaimed Susy, "and ask mother — if she's combing her hair, or *anything* — to come right out here as quick as she can run, and not wait! O, dear, dear, dear! Why, Dotty Dimple Parlin! you haven't started yet! Quick! quick! quick!"

Dotty, who had only waited to be spoken to the second time, now ran in such haste that she stumbled on the piazza steps; but, nothing daunted, jumped up and went on, delighted to know that this time something had probably happened. She startled her mother, and called her away from her toilet, with the sudden cry that the boys and pony were 'most killed.

At the same time she had the pleasure of throwing Prudy into a panic, — dear little Prudy, who had been for the last five minutes searching her treasures in the hope

of finding some toy which would replace Susy's teapot.

Prudy and Dotty appeared at the gate in a very brief space; Prudy with her mouth in the shape of the letter O, and Mrs. Parlin not far off, in the act of fastening her breastpin.

"Well, boys, what is it?" said the good lady, smiling. "I hardly think anything very serious has happened, either to you or the pony."

"*You* tell," said Eddy to Charley; "I *dassn't*. The blacksmith's man may be mad if I do. But he's abused this hoss, though," continued Eddy, not waiting to let Charley speak for him; "he's abused him awfully! It's right up and down mean; and three of us boys seen him!"

Susy clasped her hands, and performed a "stamp-act" on the pavement.

"See there," said Eddy, pointing triumphantly to Wings' left hind leg; "see that — will you?"

True enough, there were two or three small wounds, out of which was oozing thick, dark blood. Susy looked as if her heart was breaking, but not a word did she speak.

"Pete Grimes did that with his hob-nail, cowhide boots!" said Eddy, sternly.

"With his hammer, you *mean*," interposed Charley.

"With his *boot*, sir," persisted Eddy, with increasing eloquence. "Didn't I see him, me and Dan Murphy? Didn't we stand there by the coal-bin, sir? He booted him well, Mis' Parlin. I'll tell you where he did it; here on the left side, ma'am. Look where the hair sticks up! Pooty well mauled — ain't he, ma'am? Pete swore at

him, too. Never heard such talk — did you, Charley?"

"No, ma'am, I never did," replied Master Charley, addressing Mrs. Parlin, who fancied she could detect on Wings' glossy hide the marks of a boot, though there were no traces of the wicked oaths.

"It is a most abusive thing — if it is so," said she, with much feeling; for if anything could move her gentle heart to anger, it was cruelty to animals. "What made Mr. Grimes behave so strangely, boys? Was the pony restless?"

"Restless? No, indeed, ma'am," replied Eddy, the orator; "as gentle as a lamb, ma'am. It was Pete Grimes's wicked temper, and his wicked disposition; that's what it was."

It was well for Susy that her overstrained feelings now found vent in words and tears.

"There is no grief like the grief which does not speak." Her dumb agony gave way, and she wept and raved like a little wild thing.

Mrs. Parlin ordered the boys to lead the pony around to the back door, and there she washed out his wounds, trying all the while to soothe Susy, whose heart was beating a quickstep, and who trembled in every limb.

"Old Grimes is dead, that good old man!" repeated Prudy, with angry emphasis; "but it wasn't *his* father. No, indeed; with the old blue buttons down the back! Why, Peter is an awful man! I saw him once, and his face looked as if he'd been rubbing it on a pen-wiper! There, Susy, don't you cry," she added, applying a moral lesson to her sister's wounded feelings, like a healing plaster; "he's dreadful wicked,

and one of these days he'll get hurt his own self; a horse 'll strike *him!*"

"Yes, a horse 'll strike *him!*" echoed Dotty Dimple.

"But what good will that do Wings?" moaned Susy. "Evil for evil only makes things worse."

Her indignation did not lessen, but rather increased, the longer she reflected upon the subject. What right had a man to abuse anybody's horse — more especially hers?

"Mr. Grimes ought to be 'dited, and sent to the Reform School or State's Prison this very night," said she, in her wrath. Prudy thought precisely the same; also Miss Dimple, who looked upon the whole affair as a joke, intended for her amusement.

When Mr. Parlin came home to tea, and heard the story, he did not blame Susy in the least for her indignation, but started

off for the blacksmith's with the limping pony, saying he meant to "inquire into the business."

"May I go with you?" cried Susy.

"Me, too?" said Prudy, echoed by Dotty.

"Only Susy," replied their father; "she may go if she likes."

Susy very much wondered what her father was going to do. As they approached the shop, she saw, standing at the door, the man whose face looked as if it had been "rubbed on a pen-wiper."

"Mr. Grimes," said Mr. Parlin, in a pleasanter manner than Susy thought was at all necessary, "Mr. Grimes, I believe I owe you for shoeing this pony."

While Mr. Grimes was making the change, Mr. Parlin added, —

"How happens it, my friend, that this little animal bears such marks of ill treat-

ment? See how he limps. Look at this gash."

"O," said Mr. Grimes, "he lamed himself by kicking out against the coal-box; he's a nervous thing."

Mr. Parlin then told the boys' story.

"It is not so, upon my word and honor, sir," replied sooty-faced Mr. Grimes, with great amazement. "I'll leave it to Mr. Fox."

Mr. Fox, and two or three other men, declared very positively that they had seen little Wings beating himself against the coal-box; and one of them pointed out to Mr. Parlin the blood-stain on the edge of the wood.

"You can't trust much to what boys say, especially such harum-scarum fellows as Ed Johnson," added Mr. Fox. "I shouldn't wonder, now, Grimes, if he and that Piper

boy got their tempers up, and tried to spite you, for ordering them out of the shop. They were troublesome, and he had to speak sharp," added Mr. Fox, addressing Mr. Parlin again.

"That's so!" exclaimed Mr. Grimes. "You take three little chaps, and have 'em meddling with your nails, and sticking scraps of iron into the coals, and it makes a man cross — or it frets *me*, and I told 'em to quit."

"Saucy little rogues," chimed in Mr. Fox, anxious for the honor of his workman.

"As for my striking the pony," continued Mr. Grimes, "I might have patted him once or twice with the *handle* of the hammer. I often do that; but my blows wouldn't kill a fly."

After a little more conversation Mr. Parlin was satisfied that no real cruelty had

been used towards Wings. Susy's heart rose like a feather.

"*Always wait till you hear both sides of a story!*" said Mr. Parlin, as he and his daughter walked home.

"Just the words *mother* said this very day," cried Susy, skipping lightly over the paving-stones. "It's so queer you and mother should *both* talk so much alike."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WATER-KELPIE.

It was nearly time for vacation. As the children were to start on the next Monday for Willow-brook, their mother allowed them to spend their last Wednesday afternoon with their cousin Florence. It fell to Prudy's lot to dress her little sister.

"I'm ever so glad," said Dotty, "that the barber snipped off my *kyurls*. Don't you think I do look like a boy, now, Prudy? You may call me Tommy, if you want to; I'm willin'."

"There, now," she exclaimed, when her toilet was made, "say me my lesson; please to, Prudy."

"O, I forgot all about that," replied the little teacher, uneasily. "Susy 'll be done practising in half an hour, and I thought I'd just have time to make my doll's boots, — finish them, I mean. Can't you wait till Saturday, Dotty?"

"O, my suz, Prudy Parlin! When I get to be a great sister to you, I won't treat you so. I want to get my letters all smooth done to-day, — don't want to wait till Sat-'day."

At any other time Prudy would have been gratified to see Dotty show so much eagerness.

"Be kind to thy sister," hummed the gentle little teacher. "Yes, I will. I'm always glad after I've been kind. Nothing makes me love Dotty so well as to try to please her!"

"Now," said she, calling her school to

order, "you've learned as far as S, which I think is doing finely, all alone, with nobody to help us. This next letter stands, you see, for a *top*. What is it we drink out of cups?"

"I don't get anything but milk, and that's in a mug," replied Dotty, in an injured tone.

"But what does mother drink? Now think."

Dotty eyed the letter sharply. "Why, mamma drinks coffee sometimes, and it has grounds; but they don't look like that thing, the grounds don't! Why, that thing looks like a spade, with the teeth out, wrong side up."

"You mean a *rake*," laughed Prudy. "Well, dear, this is T."

When Dotty came to X, she declared it stood "for your thumb. Susy said so, and it was in the music-book."

Now came an hour of triumph for the little pupil. Her mother was both surprised and delighted to hear that her youngest daughter knew all her letters.

"She can say them skipping about," said Prudy, "and can spell a few little words, too."

"C, a, t, cat, d, o, g, Zip," laughed Dotty, showing her deepest dimples, and frisking about the room.

"My dear little ones," said Mrs. Parlin, kissing both the children, "I am really very much gratified. Both teacher and pupil have shown a great deal of patience and perseverance."

These words from her beloved mother were most precious to Prudy. Dotty, though she did not know what was meant by patience and perseverance, presumed it was something fine, and laughed and danced in great glee.

Nothing remarkable happened during the visit to Florence Eastman, except that Miss Dimple and Johnny were found running off the track of the upper railroad just one second after the engine started. Everybody was very much frightened when it was all safely over. But Dotty said, —

"O, my suz! Me an' Johnny has done that a hundred and a million times — hasn't we, Johnny? We wait till the injin w'istles, then we run on to the platform — don't we, Johnny?"

It came out after a while, that these reckless children had also been in the habit of crossing pins on the track, to make "scissors," the weight of the cars pressing the two pins into a solid χ.

"I still tremble," said Mrs. Eastman, with white lips. "This Alice Parlin is the most daring little creature I ever

saw, more harum-scarum than ever Susy was."

Prudy was Mrs. Eastman's pet. "Prudy," she said, "was a natural lady: the other two were romps."

The next Monday Mrs. Parlin and the three children started for Willow-brook. Dotty wished to take her sweet Pusheen and her darling Zip; but it was decided that Pusheen must stay at home, and help keep house.

"Be a good kitty," said her little mistress, embracing her, "and eat all the mice in the mouse-chamber, 'fore they grow up *rats!*"

But Zip was allowed to go to Willow-brook; and Dotty watched him all the way, scarcely allowing him to stir from the seat beside her.

"No," said she, holding him firmly by

both ears; "Dotty 'd be glad to let you get down, but she doesn't think it's best. You is only a doggie, and you'd get runned over and die. So now, Zippy, you'll have to give up, and it's no use to bark."

But Zip, having the spirit of a dog, *would* bark.

The whole party reached Willow-brook in safety, and had a joyful welcome.

"Prudy, my aunt Louise is the handsomest lady there is in this world," said Dotty, privately.

"O, Dotty, how can you think so," exclaimed Prudy, "when there's only one woman can be THAT!"

"Who's *she?*"

"Mother, *of course!*"

When Dotty was called to supper, she was found beside Pincher's green grave, telling her "brother Zip" the story of that

dog's death, and trying to impress upon his mind the importance of keeping his paws out of fox-traps.

It was delightful to be at grandma Parlin's once more. The summer-house, the seat in the tree, and the swing, were all in their old places, and had been waiting a whole year for the children. A few things had been added: a hennery, — called by Dotty "a henpeckery," — and a graceful white boat, named the Water-Kelpie. This boat was kept chained to a stake on the bank, and no one could have a sail in it without first obtaining the key, which hung over the bird-cage, in the back parlor.

Susy was charmed with the boat. It was lighter and nicer than the old canoe, which had so long been used by the family. She and Lonnie Adams, her aunt Martha's nephew, took daily lessons in rowing; but

Susy, who had for years been accustomed to the water, knew how to manage a boat far better than did Master Lonnie. The boy strained every nerve, to very little purpose, while Susy would lightly dip in the paddle, and turn it with perfect ease.

"I don't care," said Lonnie; "guess you can't drive a nail any better than I can, Susy Parlin, and I can row her some, anyhow. Now, Abner, can't I row her?"

"Yes, my boy, I think I've heard you *roar*," replied Abner, with a provoking smile.

"Well, can't I row her this way?"

"Middlin' well," returned Abner, cautiously; "but little Sue, here, is the waterman for me."

Susy's cheeks glowed, and there was a proud flash in her eyes as they met Lonnie's. At that moment she felt equal to the

task of steering a ship across the Atlantic Ocean.

Not long after this praise from Abner, aunt Martha said that she and Master Lonnie were going over the river, after some wild-flower roots, and would be glad to have the boat sent for them at five o'clock.

"Mayn't I be the one to go?" asked Susy.

"If you like," replied her grandmother; "that is, if Abner is willing."

Susy knew perfectly well that her grandmother had no idea of allowing her to go alone; but it so happened, when she reached the river-bank with the boat-key, that Abner was nowhere to be seen.

"Seems to me," thought Susy, "Abner is generally somewhere else."

"Where you goin', all alone, 'thout me?" cried Dotty Dimple, from the top of the bank.

"You here? What did you come for?" said Susy.

For answer, Dotty took a pair of rubber overshoes out of Zip's mouth.

"Grandma says to put 'em right on, or you'll catch the hookin' cough; the boat's wet."

"There, now," said Susy, putting on the rubbers, "I've forgot the basket for those Jack-in-the-pulpit roots. Didn't grandma send it up?"

"No, she sended up *me*," replied Dotty; adding, quickly, "and I'm goin' where you go, you know; and if you don't go anywhere, I'm goin' there, too."

"That's just the way it is with you, Dotty Dimple; always coming when I don't expect you."

"Prudy coaxed me to," said Dotty, with one of her sweetest smiles and deepest dimples.

"Coaxed you?"

"Well," faltered Dotty, "she wanted to come her own self. She said she wished I'd stay to home, — so, *of course* I camed!"

"I'll tell you how it is," said Susy, thoughtfully. "That queer old Abner's nowhere to be seen. I suppose he's in the cornfield, or the meadow, or the barn. It's after five; and what will aunt Martha think? I could row across the river well enough by myself, if you'd only run home; you're *such* a bother!"

"O, my darlin' sister Susy! I won't do nothin' but just sit still. Who's your precious comfort?"

"Well, I don't know but I'll take you, then. Come, little Miss Trouble, jump into the boat."

So Dotty Dimple, being what Mr. Allen

had called a "child-queen," had her own way, as usual.

"Why, where's the paddles?" said Susy. "The men must have hid them. Dear me, I can't stop to hunt; and here it is five o'clock long ago! O, I'll take this good smooth shingle, I declare! I guess it washed ashore on purpose; it's almost equal to a paddle. — Now we'll go, all so nice," continued Susy, fearlessly dipping the chance-found shingle into the water.

"O, my suz," said Dotty, clapping her hands, which had any amount of dimples on the backs; "we're goin'!"

"Of course we're going!" said Susy, proudly. "What did you expect? I can do five times as well with a shingle as Lonnie can with a paddle. What do you suppose aunt Martha 'll say? 'Bravo! those are smart children, to be rowing all alone, by themselves'!"

"O, Susy, what a hubble-bubble we make in the water! Look at the bubbles winkin' their eyes! See those pretty wrinkles, all puckered up in the water!"

"I see them," said Susy, steadily plying her shingle; "but why don't you sit still? You'll tip us both over, as sure as this world; and if we get drowned I guess grandma'll scold! I shall be the one to have all the blame."

"O, dear," said Dotty, reeling about from side to side, "the boat's dizzy! My head's goin' to tip into the water. But don't you cry, Susy; you catch hold of me, and I shan't go!"

Susy was suddenly seized with mortal terror.

"Dotty Parlin, I'll never take you anywhere again, as long as I live! You sit as still as ever you can, and fold your hands; fold them both!"

SUSY AND DOTTY IN THE WATER-KELPIE.

Page 117.

Dotty obeyed at once, and sat up quite straight, looking very sweet, and at the same time slightly acid, like a stick of lemon-candy. The Water Kelpie, now that Dotty was quiet, floated on, safely and surely, towards the opposite shore.

It was a pretty picture — the white boat, the graceful children, and the still, blue water. Susy's fair arms were bared to the elbows, and her face was deeply flushed. Dotty's beautiful eyes danced, but she herself was motionless and demure.

When they landed, Susy called aloud for her aunt Martha to come and secure the boat. Her voice echoed from afar, waking "the sleep of the hills," but no aunt Martha appeared. The children clambered out at last, and Susy chained the boat to a stick, which she drove into the sand. But the sand was light, the boat was heavy, and the

current strong; so before the children had walked a dozen rods, the Water Kelpie was floating down stream of its own free will.

Thus it happened that although aunt Martha was certainly surprised, she did not seem very much pleased. She did not say, "Bravo! my two nieces are smart children, to be rowing all alone by themselves." Nothing of the sort. She reproved Susy for her rash conduct, and sent her and Lonnie around two miles, by the bridge, to ask Abner to come for them with the canoe.

Lonnie was very much comforted when he saw that Susy received no praise.

"I can row her myself," said he; "but I wouldn't put Dotty in, and most drown her, and dab along with that shingle."

The runaway Water Kelpie was caught a little way below the bridge, and Abner slyly laid by the dripping shingle, and after-

wards showed it to everybody, as a proof that "our Sue was an amazin' smart little waterman."

This famous boat-ride only had the effect to make Dotty Dimple more fearless than ever; but her next adventure on the water proved somewhat serious.

CHAPTER IX.

BROTHER ZIP.

THERE was to be a remarkable supper at grandma Parlin's, in honor of Colonel Augustus Allen, who was expected in the cars. There had been a grand excursion to welcome the soldiers, and the stage would probably be very late. Susy and Prudy had the promise of sitting up till it got in, if Dotty Dimple was only willing. But Dotty said, —

O, no; you better go to bed when I go, Prudy, or you'll hear somebody scream."

"Let's see," said Prudy. "I've thought of something nice. Wouldn't you like to

go to aunt Martha's, and stay all the afternoon and all night?"

Dotty gave a little purr, like a happy kitten.

"O, yes, if they'll let me drink choc-lid out o' that silver mug."

"But who'll go with you?" said Prudy. "There, I know — Abby Grant! I'll go ask mother."

Prudy thought that she herself could not possibly be spared just now to walk as far as aunt Martha's.

Abby Grant, who was supposed to be a good child, was very glad to take charge of Dotty, and called for her at two o'clock.

Aunt Louise was in the kitchen, whipping cream. "O, my suz," said Dotty, with shining eyes; "mayn't I taste o' those bubbles 'fore I go?"

Aunt Louise poured the foaming cream over some jellies, which stood in glasses.

"You shall have some to-morrow," said she, pausing to kiss Dotty, her favorite niece. Then she led the two little girls into the dining-room, where the long table was already spread for company. Dotty could hardly keep her hands off the nice things.

"There," said aunt Louise, giving each of the children an orange, "now you may go. Abby, be sure to take good care of Dotty. Don't trust her out of your sight one minute. — Hark! there's the door-bell. You may go out of the house by the back-door."

Then Miss Louise hastened from the dining-room, without looking back to see whether the children obeyed her or not. Dotty was, in general, prompt to do as she was bidden by older people; but just now both the children found it hard to leave that

cempting table. They dared not taste the dainties, but Abby thought it could surely do no harm just to touch them. But when they had gone as far as that, Abby, who was a sly, half-taught child, grew bolder, and a sudden impulse seized her to pocket a few sweetmeats, if she could only do so without being seen by Dotty's keen eyes.

"Come, Dotty Parling," said she, "you just go ask somebody to brush your hair; it's all over your head."

Dotty sighed as she cast a last glance at the table, and then, without a word, went up stairs, unwilling to be seen by aunt Martha with her "hair all over her head."

Then Abby's heart beat fast. She heard voices in the parlor, and knew that at any moment some one might enter the dining-room, and discover her. So making a hasty choice of two large pieces of jelly-cake, and

half a dozen tarts, she swept out of the room just in time to escape meeting grandma Parlin.

Her pocket was stuffed quite full, and one end of a slice of cake peeped out, though she tried her best to press it down. But Abby had a hope that no one would notice it through her white apron.

As Dotty's hair was now in fine order, the two children set out on their walk. They had gone but a few steps when Zip came trotting along, with all speed, looking up in their faces as if to say, "What have I done, that I can't go too?"

"Queer what made *him* want to come," said Abby, tartly.

"He loves his little sister," said Dotty, stroking his nose. "He shall go, he shall; he's a darling."

The dog kept beside the children, and

every now and then Abby secretly punched him with a stick, while Dotty was patting his head, and chatting with him.

It was a long way to aunt Martha's; and Abby, besides feeling guilty, and ashamed of herself, was also very anxious to eat the goodies which made such a bunch in her pocket. Zip seemed to know there was cake somewhere, and sniffed about in a way which made her rather nervous.

"Here, let's creep under this fence," said she; "what's the use to go 'round by the road? It's a great deal nearer to your aunt's house through the field."

"There, child," cried she, when they were on the other side of the fence, "now I want to go behind this clump of trees, to — to find a book I left here yesterday: but you mustn't come, Dotty."

"What for can't I? Yes, I shall, Abby

Grant; you shame yourself! I'm goin' every single where you go; so, now, you'll have to give up!"

"Dot Parling, you go right along with your doggie! I'll come in a minute."

Dotty thought a girl of Abby's age had no right to command her. She stamped her little foot, but it made no sound in the soft grass.

"I isn't a-goin' to go 'long with my doggie, Abby Grant; 'cause — so there!"

"But you must. You know, Dot Parling," said Abby, more gently, "your grandma expects you to do just what I tell you. I'm afraid, dear, you won't get any of that bubbled cream if you don't mind, nor any tarts."

The child-queen began to think it was wisest to obey; but she did so with a very ill grace.

"Well, Abby Grant, I will go 'long with my doggie; but it's 'cause I'm tired, and don't want to help you find your old book — so, there!"

"That's right, Dotty. Start quick — can't you?"

Dotty took "high ground" at once. She looked Abby full in the face.

"Do you like *yourself*, Abby Grant?"

"I don' know. Yes: why?"

"'Cause I shouldn't think you would! I 'spise you!"

Having freed her mind, Dotty walked on with Zip, only turning back once, to exclaim, —

"There, Abby, now you'll have to give up!"

Abby, naughty girl, ate her cake in secret, staining her white apron with the jelly, while little Miss Dimple trudged on, think-

ing it very strange Abby should be so long finding that book.

Perhaps for the reason that she was rather out of sorts, and thinking about Abby rather than about the road, she missed her way, and soon found herself in a narrow lane she had never seen before.

Zip looked rather uneasy, but followed close by her side. Dotty walked on and on, till the track had faded quite away. This was not the road to aunt Martha's. Why didn't Abby come?

Dotty, too proud to cry, too angry to look back, wandered till she came to the edge of the Parlin woods. Here was a little creek, tumbling over some small gray rocks; the same "crick" where Horace had sometimes gone fishing.

"True as you live," said Dotty to herself, "here's a teenty-tonty river."

There was no way of crossing the creek, and the child felt as if she had come to the very end of the world. Her courage began to fail.

"Dotty Dimple," said she, stamping her foot, "don't you cry! If you do cry, Dotty Dimple, I'll shut you up in the closet."

But, in spite of these brave words, the unhappy child felt two or three tears raining down her cheeks. She now seated herself on the grass, and screamed for Abby.

"When she comes," thought Dotty, "I'll tell her she's 'shamed herself!"

At first it seemed as if Abby were answering her; but the sound proved to be only the echo of Dotty's own voice. O, she might scream all the afternoon, and Abby wouldn't try to hear! O, dear; before anybody would come, a bear, or a wolf, or a

whale might rush right out of the woods and eat her up! Then how Abby would cry! Abby's mother would whip her with a big stick, and say, "There, now; what made you go behind the trees, and let that little Parlin girl lose herself, and get ate up! I don't think you're very polite, you naughty girl!"—O, how everybody would cry!

But what was that little funny thing on the water? Forgetting her sudden fear of bears and whales, a fear which Abby herself had put into her little head, Dotty gazed at the "funny thing." Could it be a little truly sail-boat? Yes, it certainly was. How it got into the creek Dotty never stopped to think; the question was, how could she get it out?

She blew it with her breath, but it only floated farther away. She waited, hoping it

would turn about, and come towards her. She threw sticks at it, but in vain. The boys, who had set it sailing and gone into the woods for raspberries, would have laughed to see her efforts. Presently she took off her hat, held it by one string, and flung it in, as if it had been a fishing-net. It was all of no use; the boat acted as if it were alive, and did not choose to be caught.

Dotty had forgotten all about Abby, and the visit to aunt Martha's.

"I know what I'll do," thought she, winking very fast. "I'll catch that boat; I will!"

When Dotty had made up her mind, she never stopped for trifles. She drew off her stockings and gaiters, and stepped into the creek. Boys waded in the water, why couldn't she? There was nothing to bite her! She wasn't afraid!

She had supposed the water would only cover her feet, but she found herself sadly mistaken. The creek was remarkably deep, and, more than that, the bottom was so soft that she sank down, down, at every step.

Poor child! It was hard enough to get lost; it was harder still to be drowned!

"O, papa!" she screamed; "O, mamma! O, Prudy! can't you come? I don't want to drown, and not have *you* drown, Prudy. Can't you come, somebody? O, somebody come!"

But there were no human ears near enough to hear her piteous cries. She must have drowned — there is no doubt of it — if Zip had not been close at hand. The moment he saw her sinking, he gave a low bark and swam after her.

Before he could reach the unfortunate child the water was up to her waist, and

she was wringing her little helpless hands, and saying, "Now I lay me down to sleep!"

Faithful old Zip lost not a moment, but seized her skirts and dragged her to the bank, laying her on the ground as tenderly as her own mother could have done.

Now you see why it is that God had put it into Zip's loving heart to "want to come with his little sister."

Abner, who arrived a few minutes later, in order to cut some young birches for his fence, said, —

"Wasn't it lucky that that dog *happened* to be right on the spot? And lucky, too, that I *happened* along in the nick of time, to carry the poor little girl home in my arms?"

But the truth is, in this world which our Heavenly Father watches over, nothing ever comes by chance, and events do not *happen*.

Abby shed many bitter tears, but they were not so much tears of sorrow for her sin, as of shame for being found out. Such weeping does no good. Indeed I am afraid it only hardened Abby's heart.

But the day ended gloriously for Dotty. She was handed about to be kissed by everybody, and was, after all, allowed to sit up till nine o'clock, and actually ate a "bubbled cream," sitting as close as she could beside Colonel Allen's elbow.

CHAPTER X.

DR. PRUDY.

THE next day Dotty had a severe cold, and her mother, fearing the croup, did not allow her to go out of doors. This was hard for the child. She felt very restless, because she had to give up "housekeeping" with Prudy, a very fascinating game, which could only be played on the river-bank. She looked out of the kitchen window, and saw some carpenters shingling the barn.

"O, hum!" she murmured, "I wish grandpa wouldn't mend his barn!"

A white mist was creeping slowly over the river and the distant hills.

"There, now," she sighed, "I wish the earth wouldn't *breave* so hard!"

Then she went into the parlor, like a little gray cloud.

"O, dear; I don't like this house, 'cause its got a top to it! Wish I was somewhere else!"

"Poor child," said Colonel Allen, who was seated on the sofa, looking out of the bay-window upon the garden; "do you love home better than this beautiful spot?"

"No," replied the little one, shaking her head. "I don't love my home, 'cause I live there; I don't love nothin'. O, hum, suz!"

Then Dotty wandered into the nursery, and stood all alone, leaning against the lounge.

"I shouldn't think my mother 'd let me be so cross," mused she.

She did not cry, for she had learned very young that crying is of no use; and it may be, too, that she had only a small fountain of tears back of her eyes. Prudy, entering the nursery in eager haste, for her "bean-bags," was touched at sight of her sister's sad face.

"There, now, I'll put back my bean-bags, and try to make her happy," said Prudy to herself. "That will be following the Golden Rule; for it's doing unto Dotty as I want Susy to do unto me, when *I'm* sick."

She went quietly up to Dotty, who still stood leaning gloomily against the lounge. The child turned around with a sudden smile. It cheered her to see Prudy's sweet face, which was always sunny with a halo of happy thoughts.

"Are you real sick, though, Dotty Dimple?"

"Yes, I are," replied Dotty, well pleased to be asked such a question. "I got 'most drowned, you know. O, I wish you'd staid out in the rain the other day, and got cold; then you'd have been sick, too."

Prudy smiled, for she knew that her little sister really had no such unkind wish at heart. She was only trying, with her limited stock of words, to say that she longed to have a little sympathy. It was not often that Dotty was willing to be pitied.

"See here, Prudy darling, don't you want a piece of my cough-candy? It's good! You may bite clear down to there, where I've scratched with a pin."

"No, thank you, dear, I don't care a bit for it."

Dotty's face beamed with joyous dimples. It was so pleasant to be generous, and at the same time keep the candy! In her

short life Dotty Dimple had not quite learned that "the half is better than the whole."

"Now," said Prudy, after thinking a while, "suppose we play that you're sick, — as you are, you know, — and I'm the doctor."

Dotty gave a little scream of delight.

"You may see my tongue," said she, running to the looking-glass; "it's real rusty. Can't you scrape it with a knife, Prudy?"

"You must say *doctor*, when you speak to me. Now, my dear patient, it's best for you to lie on the lounge, and take medicine in the chest. Poor young lady, we shall be so glad when you get your health all well! — Do you want me to extricate a tooth? Have you any headache, miss?"

Prudy's voice was low and sympathetic.

"Yes, Dr. Prudy," replied the patient,

with a stifled groan; "I've truly got the ache in my head; it pricks through my hair."

"I'll tell you the cause of that, my dear patient; I suspect your pillow's made of pin-feathers. Let me feel your pulse on the back of your hand — your wrist, I mean. Terrible," moaned the young doctor, gazing mournfully at the ceiling; "it's stopped beating. Can't expect your life now. O, no!"

"Now you must put your hands behind you, and walk across the room," suggested Dotty; "that's the way."

"If my memory preserves me right," continued the young doctor, pacing the floor, "you've got the — ahem! — pluribus unum." Here Dr. Prudy ran her fingers through her hair. "But it goes light this year — with care, ma'am, you know. So I'll go

and stir you up some pills in my marble mortar."

"O, dear me, doctor; don't you now! Bring me some lemonade and nuts, for I'm dreffful sick; but don't bring me no pills nor molters!"

"Poh, only brown bread, Dotty! what do you suppose?"

Upon the whole, Miss Dimple, being petted to her heart's content, had quite a comfortable day of it.

In the evening she asked, —

"Mightn't I eat supper, all alone, in the parlor? Once, when I had the sores all wrinkled out on my face, on my chin and round my eyes, all round, *then* I ate in the parlor."

Prudy, with her grandmother's consent, carried in a pretty salver, on which were a little Wedgewood teapot, with hot water,

a tiny sugar-bowl and creamer, a plate, and cup and saucer, some slices of toast, and a glass of jelly.

"Thank you a whole heart-full," said Dotty, springing off the sofa; "that little waiter and so forth is real big enough for me."

Dotty thought "and so forth" meant "cups and saucers." She had heard Norah tell Prudy, when she wished to set the table, that she might put on "the knives and forks, and so forth," and Dotty had noticed that it was always cups and saucers after the knives and forks.

"But, Dr. Prudy, there's one thing you've forgot," said the young patient; "a little tea-bell, so I can tingle it, and call you in."

The bell was brought, and while the rest of the family ate in the dining-room, Dotty

took her "white tea" in the parlor, in queenly state.

Prudy had eaten half a thin slice of toast, when the long and sharp ringing of the tea-bell summoned her into the parlor.

"And what would you like, Miss Dimple?" said the remarkably obliging doctor, with a low bow.

"More jelly," replied the patient, holding up the empty glass, "and some squince marmalade."

After obeying this request, Prudy went back to her supper, and had just finished her slice of bread, when the bell struck again.

This time there was "that old spin-wheel in the chimney again,"—so the patient said, —and a book in the whatnot wrong side up, looking "as if it would choke."

The book was set right; but the noise in

the chimney was too much for the doctor's skill, since neither she nor any one else knew its cause.

Next sounded a furious peal of the bell, and a series of loud screams from the little sick girl. She had been dreadfully stung by a bee, which had buzzed its way out from the fireboard. Strange to tell, there was a swarm of bees in the chimney, instead of "a spin-wheel."

Abner at once mounted to the roof of the house, and peeped into the chimney. A nice, cosy bee-hive it made, filled to the throat with waxen cells.

Dotty bore her sufferings sweetly, being sustained by the promise of a large box of honey, by and by.

"Bees have a 'sweet, sweet home,' I think," said Susy.

"So do ants when they get in the sugar-box," rejoined Prudy.

As night approached, Dotty showed symptoms of croup.

"I think," said her grandmother, "it will be the safest way to give her some castor-oil and molasses; that is what her father used to take when he was a little boy."

Dotty pouted. "Dirty, slippy castor-oil," she cried, shaking her elbows — a thing she seldom did now. "I shan't let it go in my throat. I'll bite my teeth togedder tight."

"Alice," said her grandmother, "is that the proper way to speak to me?"

The child's face cleared in a moment.

"I wasn't a-speakin' to you, grandma," said she, sweetly; "I was a talkin' to the dust-pan."

"O, Dotty Parlin!" cried Prudy, much distressed. "Nobody ever talked to the dust-pan, in all the days of their lives! I

always thought you were a good girl, Dotty, but now I am afraid you tell false fibs!"

Dotty clung about Prudy like a sweet pea, and peeped into her eyes with a pleading look.

"Say, do you love me, Prudy? For I'm goin' to let the oil slip right down my throat, just as my papa did when *he* was a little boy."

After swallowing the oil and molasses, Dotty grew very affectionate, and kissed everybody twice, all around. Then she said her prayers, and went to bed.

"Mamma," said she, "now smoove me up under my chin, please." She loved to have the sheet laid straight. "Do you s'pose God will take care o' me to-night, mamma?"

"Certainly, my darling; you may be very sure He will. Your heavenly Father

never sleeps. He watches over you always."

"Now, truly, does he?" said the child, pressing her flushed cheek against the pillow. "Does he see me in my chubby bed, when the moon 's all dark?

"O, my suz!" cried she, suddenly, raising her head; "God can take care o' me most always, you know, but I'm drefful afraid something will catch me while he's 'tending to *another* man!"

Mrs. Parlin explained to her little daughter, as well as she could, the omnipresence and infinite goodness of God; and while she was still talking, in low, soothing tones, the little one fell asleep.

But about midnight there was a sudden alarm. Lights glanced here and there over the house, and Susy and Prudy were wakened from a deep sleep by the sound of

voices. Dotty had a violent attack of croup.

"Put me out doors," gasped the poor little sufferer, when she could speak at all. "I can't breave if the window's *ever* so up Get me nearer to the moon. Then I can breave!"

"It's so dreadful!" sobbed Susy. "I feel real sure she's going to die this time."

"O, no, I don't think she will," said Prudy, shaking the tears off her eyelashes. "God took care of me when I had the lameness, and He'll take care of her. He loves her as much as He loves me."

"Now just listen to me," returned Susy, pacing the floor of the green chamber, in her night-dress, while Prudy sat on the edge of the bed. "God loves us all; but that's no sign we can't die! Little children, no older than Dotty, have their breath

snatched right away, and are covered up in the ground, with gravestones at their heads and feet. O, you haven't the least idea, Prudy. You never think anything can happen!"

"Well, things don't happen very often, you know, Susy."

"There, Prudy Parlin, don't talk so! I feel just as if Dotty was going to die this very night."

"O, I don't think she will, Susy. But she's God's little girl, and if He wants her up in heaven He has a right to take her. He never'll take her, though, unless it's best, now certainly."

"Sit still, Prudy, just as you are. The moon is shining into the window, on your tears, and it seems as if I could almost see a rainbow in your eyes! — There, it's gone now. What makes you talk so queer about

God, Prudy? as if you knew a great deal more than I do?"

"I don't know half as much as you do," replied Prudy; "but I used to lie and think about the Saviour when I had the lameness. — Hark! Is that Dotty laughing? Let's go in and see if she isn't 'most well."

The child was indeed better; but for the next three nights she suffered from severe attacks of the croup. Her sisters had not known how they loved her till she showed her frail side, and they saw how slender was the thread which bound her to earth. When she was strong, and roguish, and wilful, they forgot that she was only a tender flower after all, and might be nipped from the stem any time.

When she was well again, Prudy said to her mother, in confidence, "It didn't

kill her, the croup didn't, but it might have killed her; and I'm going to love her all the time as if she was really dead, and gone to heaven."

CHAPTER XI.

BUYING A BROTHER.

"ONE, two, buckle my slipper! no, my gaiters," repeated Miss Dimple, as Prudy laced her boots. "I wish I was a horse, then my shoes would be nailed on, and be done with it."

"I'm so glad, said Prudy, putting on her hat, "that we can go to housekeeping again."

They had built a shingle palace on the bank of the river. It was as white as chalk could make it, and glared like a snowdrift out of a clump of evergreens which were no taller than dandelions.

"Our house is shaded so much," said Prudy, "that it makes me think of a lady with hair over her eyes."

The entrance to the little palace was through a swinging door, of white cloth, and from the roof fluttered a small flag. There were four rooms in the house, all of them on the ground floor. The parlor was elegantly furnished with a braided carpet, of striped grass, a piano, whose black and white keys were put on with coal and chalk, not to mention other articles of luxury. The table was spread with acorn-cups and poppy teapots, the little housekeepers being advised not to make use of their china dishes for this establishment.

There was a very black stove in the kitchen, but the most of the cooking was done out of doors, farther down the bank, in ovens shaped like swallows' nests. Here

were baked delicious mud cakes, tempting currant tarts, and dainty custards.

Nothing pleased Miss Dimple so well as to govern a household. She ruled with a rod of iron.

In the midst of a caution to her servant-maid, Prudy, "not to burn her biscuits as black as so'-leather," she was surprised to see her twinkling off a tear.

"O, Prudy, I didn't mean to scold," said she, in the tenderest tones.

"Poh, as if I minded your make-believe, Dotty! I was only thinking about aunt Madge — that's all."

"What has she done?" asked Dotty, as she went on stamping her mud cake with the head of a pin.

"It isn't done yet, Dotty; but it will be. She's going to be married."

Dotty dropped her mud-cake. "Why! who to? Abner?"

"O, dear, no! To Mr. — I mean Colonel — Augustus Allen. Didn't you ever hear of that?"

"Was that why he sent his objections to mamma?" asked Dotty, in a low voice.

"He sent his *respects* to mother, if that's what you mean; and in the same letter he said, 'Give oceans of love to Prudy.' As if it wasn't bad enough to break my heart, without trying to drown me," murmured Prudy, with dripping eyes.

"I don't see what you're crying for," broke in her little sister. "I shall marry my papa one of these days. I should think you'd feel badder about that. Who's *you* goin' to marry, Prudy?"

"Nobody, Dotty, as long as I live! I shall stay at home with my mother, and she'll be sitting in the rocking-chair, knitting, and father 'll be sitting by the window,

reading the paper. — But there," added she, "aunt Madge might be married three or four times, and I wouldn't care. It's her going to New York that makes my heart ache so."

"Well, she'll come back bimeby," said Dotty, soothingly.

"O," replied Prudy, with a wise smile; "seems to me when I was four years old I knew a great deal more than you do, child! People that are married stay away always."

"I wish they wouldn't," cried Dotty, beginning to feel alarmed. "I'll ask Colonel 'Gustus to marry Abby Grant after she gets growed, and let my auntie stay at home."

"The worst of it is," continued Prudy, glad of her sister's sympathy, such as it was, "Colonel Allen is a lawyer."

"Well, isn't lawyers as good as white folks?"

"The only trouble with lawyers, Dotty, is, that they can't write so you can read it. My father told me so. He said their writing was like turkeys' tracks. He said it looked as if a fly had got into the inkstand, and crawled over the paper.

Dotty's face was the picture of distress.

"It's a drefful thing to grow up a nidiot," said she, drawing her mouth down as she had seen Prudy do when beseeching her to learn the alphabet. "Don't he know all the letters, skippin' about?"

Here aunt Louise's voice was heard, from the piazza. She asked if the children would like to go with her and see Mrs. Gray's baby. After a little washing and brushing they were ready.

"Auntie," said Dotty, as they walked along, "you've got my porkmonnaie."

"Very true; so I have."

"How much money is in my pork-monnaie?"

"Two dollars and a half. Why?"

"'Cause I want to give it to Mr. Colonel Allen, to make him marry Abby Grant when she gets growed. I 'spise her, and I want her to go to New York. There's where the husbands and wives go."

Miss Louise laughed.

"Very well," said she; "you may give the money to 'Mr. Colonel,' and I've no doubt you can persuade him to marry any one you please."

Dotty smiled with entire satisfaction, but Prudy looked inquiringly into her auntie's face, not believing it possible that Colonel Allen would really change his mind for two dollars and a half.

The children went wild over the sleeping baby, Philip Gray.

"He's a brother, isn't he?" said Dotty. "I wish he was mine. I haven't any but Zip. I'd take my kitty out of the carriage, and put in this brother, and give him all my sugar things."

"Well," said Dr. Gray, with a flicker of fun in his eyes, "the baby is not of the least use to *me*, and if you would like him, my dear—"

Dotty danced about the cradle.

"He's nicer than a squir'l catched in a cage. O, he is!"

"That's just as people may fancy," said Dr. Gray. "Now I think, for my part, a squirrel would be less trouble, for he could get his own living."

Dotty peeped into the doctor's face with her bright eyes, to make sure he really liked squirrels better than babies.

"But," continued he, very gravely, "it

may be his mother might object to my giving him away. I don't know why it is, but she seems to value him very highly. She would expect some money for him, I think. How much are you willing to pay?"

Dotty reflected. She possessed several dollies, a new tea-set, a box of picture-books, and a red morocco ball. But what would Dr. Gray care for these, or her various other toys? All her money was contained in her portemonnaie, the money which she had meant should put a stop to her aunt Madge's dreadful marriage. Should she save her auntie, and give up the baby? Or should she buy the baby, and leave her auntie to her fate?

The struggle in her mind was a severe one, but it did not last long.

"O," thought she, looking at the little

sleeper in the cradle, "I'd rather have him than aunt Madge; for he'll stay to our house, and sleep in my crib."

"How now?" said Dr. Gray, pinching Dotty's cheek; "made up your mind?"

"Yes, sir," replied the child, with her finger in her mouth; "I'm goin' to buy him. I mean, I'm goin' to if I can get him for two dollars and a half."

"A generous sum," laughed the doctor. "Well said. Now, the next thing is, to obtain his mother's consent."

This was very easily done, for Mrs. Gray, who was not strong, and had only a young girl in the kitchen, declared that, dearly as she loved the baby, she found him a deal of trouble.

Dotty's face was radiant; but Prudy, who understood that the whole conversation was

merely a playful one, looked down upon her younger sister with a sage smile.

"Don't you think," whispered Dotty, clutching her auntie by the dress, "don't you think we'd better be going?"

"Why, dear, are you tired of your brother so soon?"

"O, I want to get the carriage, you know, and the money to pay him for."

Miss Louise, who knew that her little niece was terribly in earnest, now tried to divert her with pictures; but Dotty was not to be wheedled by any such arts.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Dr. Gray; "we'll keep little Phil for you till he's as tall as a pair of tongs."

Unfortunately there was a fireplace in the room, and Dotty's keen eyes at once espied the tongs, leaning against a brass rester. As quick as a thought she seized

them, and laid them in the cradle beside the baby. They were half an inch shorter than Phil — even the doctor was obliged to confess it.

"Bravo! Miss Bright Eyes," said he, catching up Dotty, and whirling her over his shoulder; "you have a shrewd little brain of your own. I see you can be trusted to make your own bargains."

The baby had been for some moments nestling uneasily, and of course was broad awake by this time, screaming lustily, as if to protest against the inhuman proceeding of being bought and sold.

Dotty had just time to see that her "brother" had "nut-blue" eyes, when she was hurried away by her aunt Louise.

For three days the expectant child was kept in suspense by mirthful Dr. Gray, who pretended that he should bring the

baby to her some time when she did not expect it. She often rushed into the parlor, saying, "O, I thought I heard somethin' cryin';" and almost cried herself because there was no baby there. "I wish I could stop expecting my brother," said Dotty, sorrowfully, "for then he might come."

But, at last, after her young heart had throbbed again and again with false hopes, she began to see that she had been cruelly deceived. Dr. Gray did not mean, and never had meant, to sell his baby.

"He tells too many fibs," said Dotty, stamping her foot, and looking very much flushed; "he cheated me, he did."

"Now, Susy, do you think it was right to cheat her so?" said Prudy, sorry for Dotty's disappointment.

"I don't know," replied the older sister,

hesitating. "Dr. Gray is a real good man. I don't believe he meant to cheat. Father wears paper collars sometimes, and makes believe they are linen; but then, you know, *father* wouldn't cheat! Dr. Gray was only joking. The trouble is, Dotty is too little to understand jokes. Dr. Gray didn't mean to break his word."

"Well, if he didn't break it, he *bent* it," replied Prudy, positively.

CHAPTER XII.

A WEDDING.

"I SHAN'T buy any more brothers as long as I live — now you see if I do," said Dotty Dimple, with quivering lips.

"Come here, little one, and sit on my knee," said Colonel Augustus Allen. "Can't you think of something next as good as a baby brother? How would you fancy a grown-up uncle?"

Dotty looked wonderingly into Colonel Allen's face.

"Who's got any to sell?" said she.

"Possibly the minister may have," said Colonel Allen, laughing. "You wait till

this evening, and very likely he may be here. Then you can go up to him and say, 'Please, Mr. Hayden, will you sell me an uncle?'"

"But he'll cheat me—he will," said Dotty, shaking her finger.

"O, no, never fear. Just try him, and see. Here's a sealed envelope which Susy may keep for you till night."

"And shan't I have to spend the money in my porkmonnaie?"

"Not a cent of it, chickie."

Something was going on which was called *a wedding;* though what a wedding might be, Miss Dimple had no idea, having never attended one in all her life. But it was something remarkable, no doubt, for the parlors were glowing with flowers, and everybody was in a flutter. The three children, dressed in their very best, were

allowed to sit up for the whole evening, or, at any rate, as long as they pleased.

It was as lovely out of doors as "a Lapland night." The full moon and the gay lamplight tried to outshine one another.

"Do look at that great moon dripping down the juniper tree," cried Prudy, growing poetical as she gazed. "Let me tell you, Susy, when the moon is young and little, it makes me think of a smile, and when it's a grown-up, full moon, it makes me think of a laugh."

Just as Dotty was beginning to wonder whether she felt sleepy or not, the door-bell rang; and after that it kept ringing every few minutes for an hour. By that time the fragrant parlors were almost filled with guests. Everybody had a few kind words for the children, and Prudy listened and answered with timid blushes; but Dotty

Dimple was, as usual, very fearless, and perfectly at ease.

Presently Colonel Allen, and Miss Margaret, and Miss Louise entered the room. Dotty had been wondering where they were.

"Now," whispered aunt Louise, "now's the time to ask Mr. Hayden for that new uncle."

Dotty stepped briskly up to the minister.

"Here's a letter for you," said she, "and it says, 'Will you please sell me an uncle, sir?"

Mr. Hayden smiled, and asked the little maiden what sort of an uncle she would like.

"A new one," she replied, bending her head one side, and peeping up in his face like a tame canary, "and a soldier, too, if you've got any to sell."

Mr. Hayden said he certainly had, and laughed when he spoke, though Dotty could not imagine why. Dr. Gray took her up in his arms, and declared he would like to carry her home in his pocket. Such an idea! And Dr. Gray was the man who had cheated her! When he set her down again she stood on her dignity, and carried her head like a queen.

She had hardly crossed the room, and taken her station beside Prudy, when a hush fell upon the company. Dotty was inclined to think people had paused in conversation to watch *her*. Colonel Allen and aunt Madge were standing together, and Mr. Hayden in front of them. The guests were looking at *them*, not at Miss Dotty Dimple!

Mr. Hayden began to talk very solemnly — almost like preaching. No one else

spoke; no one smiled. Before Dotty could ask what they were doing, Mr. Hayden was praying; and after the prayer, which was so hearty and simple that Dotty could almost understand it, the whole room was in motion again. Everybody seemed suddenly bent on kissing aunt Madge, though what that young lady had been doing which was better than usual Dotty could not exactly make out. But this, she concluded, was in some way connected with the entertainment called *a wedding*.

"Come, now, little lady," said Mr. Hayden, taking Dotty's hand, and leading her up to Colonel Allen, "here is the uncle you have bought. He is new, and a soldier too. So you see I have done my best for you."

"That?" said Dotty, pointing her index-finger at the bridegroom in surprise. "I

know *him;* he isn't *new*. He is Mr. Colonel. He isn't my uncle a bit, sir."

"True, he was not, five minutes ago, Miss Dimple; but the few little words you heard me say to him have made a wonderful change. He is now your uncle Augustus, and your aunt Margaret is Mrs. Allen."

Dotty looked up bewildered. Her newly-married aunt was engaged in talking to the guests; but Colonel Allen was gazing down upon his new niece with an arch smile.

"The minister did not cheat you, you see," said he. "He has really given you what he promised."

"I didn't want you to marry my good auntie," was all Dotty's answer.

"Ah, my dear, that is very sad! I was not aware that you had any dislike for me."

"O, I love you," exclaimed Dotty, "'cause you carry me pickaback; *but* I wish you knew your letters skippin' about!"

The minister and the bridegroom smiled at this absurd little speech, and it was repeated to everybody in the room. Prudy felt very guilty, and blushed like a damask rose, for she knew where Dotty had caught the idea of Colonel Allen's extreme ignorance.

"I am very sorry, little Miss Dimple, that you object to me," said the new uncle; "but by and by you and I will take the big dictionary, and you may point out the letters to me. I think you will find I know them 'skippin' about.' Is there anything else you have against me?"

"Yes, sir," replied the child, earnestly; "you're a lawyer — my father says so. You wrote to him once."

"Did I? What did I write?"

"A letter."

"And where was the harm in that?"

"O, it looked like turkeys' tracks — he said it did. You wrote the letter with a fly. You dipped him in the inkstand, and stuck him on a pin, and wrote with him. My father says so."

"You surprise me, Dotty. I really don't remember it. Have you any other reason for not wishing me to be your uncle?"

"I wanted you to marry somebody else."

"Indeed! You ought to have mentioned it before! What young lady had you chosen for me, Miss Dimple?"

"Abby Grant, the little girl that went behind the tree and let me lose myself. I'd as lief she'd go to New York as not. If you'd only waited for her she'd have growed up."

By this time Mrs. Parlin, though somewhat amused by her little daughter's sharp speeches, thought it best to put an end to them by taking her away into a corner. She was too much inclined to pertness.

The evening was very delightful; but like everything else in this world it could not last always. After the guests had departed, and before the doors were closed or the lights put out, the three tired children slowly wound their way up stairs.

"Im glad it's over and done," said Prudy, resignedly. "I've cried just all I'm going to."

"I only wish Grace Clifford had been here," murmured Susy, clutching hold of the baluster.

"Well, I don't wish nothin', so there," said Dotty Dimple, dreamily.

And this is the last word we are to hear from her. She is nearly asleep. Let us bid her and her two older sisters a Good Night and Pleasant Dreams.